

ABSTRACT

Heather Walston, PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM-SERVICE LEADERSHIP PROJECTS AT EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY: A PROGRAM EVALUATION (Under the direction of Dr. Marjorie Ringler). Department of Educational Leadership, December 2019.

Preparing future principals for their roles within school systems has changed throughout the years. Universities have devised varying techniques in which they accomplish this monumental task. East Carolina University (ECU) uses Service Leadership Projects as a tool to provide training for prospective Master of School Administration (MSA) degree candidates. The Service Leadership Projects students must complete in order to graduate provide a foundation upon which the students develop leadership skills in the following areas: Positive Impact on Student Learning and Development, Teacher Empowerment and Leadership, Community Involvement and Engagement, Organizational Management, School Culture and Safety, and School Improvement. The purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of preparation program from graduates' perspectives and to determine if there are relevant suggestions to better the program. The evaluation will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature and will involve past participants of the MSA program at ECU that have obtained jobs in educational leadership roles. The participants were required to answer a survey and a series of interview questions. The questions were developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program from the participants' point of view. Data was also taken from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey as well as the North Carolina School Report Card to more effectively analyze the impact the participants had on their respective schools. Findings indicated Service Leadership Projects were an effective tool in training prospective MSA degree candidates who will become school leaders.

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM SERVICE LEADERSHIP PROJECTS
AT EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

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by

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to Renee Manning. Thank you for never giving up on me.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

East Carolina University (ECU) offers a Master of School Administration (MSA) degree for perspective students that have an entry level school license and a minimum of three years teaching experience. There are two ways a student can complete the MSA program. The first way is for a student to attend full time. Full time students begin in the fall and continue for three consecutive semesters. The second way a student may complete the degree is by attending part time. Part time students begin in the second term of summer school and continue for six continuous semesters. Both full and part time students must complete 42 student hours. Students must complete 27 coursework hours and 15 internship hours to be awarded the MSA degree (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

ECU centers their MSA degree around Service Leadership Projects. Service Learning is learning through providing a service to someone else. In this case, the student is learning by providing a service to a specific school. Professors have devised the six specific Service Leadership Projects to provide a well rounded experience for the student aligned with national and state standards. The student will complete six Service Leadership Projects throughout the course of the program. Service Learning is the center of the program and dictates a majority of the students' learning over the course of approximately two years. The school district the student is a part of must agree to support the student throughout their endeavor of achieving the MSA degree. The student will not be successful in completing the requirements unless they have the full support of the district. The university requires documented agreements between the student, the superintendent, and the principal of the school. These documented agreements ensure each party is aware of the expectations that are in place in order for the student to successfully

complete the program. If at any time the students' professor does not feel the student is being granted the experience they need in order to thrive in the program, they may intervene on the students' behalf (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

The student will continuously be involved in a Service Leadership Project throughout their time in the program. The six different Service Leadership Projects include: Positive Impact on Student Learning and Development, Teacher Empowerment and Leadership, Community Involvement and Engagement, Organizational Management, School Culture and Safety, and School Improvement. These six projects encompass a wide variety of responsibilities educational leaders must face on a daily basis. The intent behind the projects is to provide a well rounded experience for each student. No two students will have the same experience when it comes to Service Leadership Projects, as school needs vary from district to district (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

Each project consists of five sections the student must complete. The first section is the Data Collection and Data Analysis Section. This section helps the student become more familiar with the school in which they are serving. The student will use resources such as the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, NC School Report Card, newspaper articles, and the Data Manager at the school to aid them in completing the first section. In section two the student must identify areas for improvement. The student will be able to complete this section after the data is analyzed from section one. Section three includes the Professional Language Summary. This section includes the research the student will conduct on the area in which the project focuses. Section four includes the Action Plan. This section includes the actions the student will take in order to make an impact at the school and complete the goal of the project. Section five includes the Project Evaluation and Impact Summary. In this section the student

evaluates the impact the project had on the summary and reflects upon the implementation process. In this section, the student is allowed the opportunity to discuss the high points as well as the low during this process (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

The leadership experiences the students will have greatly depend upon the course faculty advise, coaching, and the principal of their school. The principal will play a tremendous role in guiding the student during this process. If a student is privileged to work with an experienced principal, they may have ideas regarding the type of project the student should do to benefit the school. However, in some circumstances it will be the students' responsibility to bring an idea to the principal for discussion and approval. Projects will directly relate to a need the school has for the student to address. The idea is for the student to completely research the topic and ultimately provide recommendations to better the current situation.

When the student has completed all six Service Leadership Projects and documented them appropriately, they will have a complete portfolio of leadership evidences that are necessary to obtain a North Carolina Principals' License. The projects must be approved by the students' professor. Professors generally assign due dates to various parts of the projects. The professor will go over the sections and send them back to the student with comments and suggestions about moving forward. This entails an extreme amount of work, dedication, and time on the students' behalf. The completed electronic portfolio is the outcome of two years of projects the student has completed. The student works with their professor as well as the principal of their school in deciding what type of venture to complete for each Service Leadership Project. Each project has a theme and each schools' needs are different. Some students choose to complete all six projects at one school, while other students may choose

various schools to complete the different projects. Projects completed by all students will be beneficial to the school in which the student is serving. The school will reap the benefits of the students' hard work at no extra cost to them (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

ECU requires full time and part time students to fulfill the six Service Leadership Projects. It is important to consider that these projects are the highlight of the students' experience in the MSA program. The classes offered to the students coincide with what the student will be working on in the field of study. The "hands-on" approach to learning is what defines the program at ECU. The purpose of Service Learning embedded in the MSA program is to prepare the student for educational leadership responsibilities. The Service Leadership Projects should provide a solid foundation of learning and growth for the student (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

Whether the student is full time or part time will depend upon the degree of leadership opportunities the student will experience. For example, a Principal Fellow will be part of the leadership team full time four days a week during their second year in the program. If the student is a Principal Fellow, the student will attend classes full time during their first year in the program and will serve as a Principal Intern during their second year in the program. The student will attend classes during their second year as well, however, they will not have as many face to face contact hours with professors. The Principal Fellow experience provides total immersion into the school setting for the student. The student is expected to be treated as an Assistant Principal during this time in the program. When a student attends the program part time, they will not have the same experience. The part time student is typically still teaching in the

classroom and must log intern hours during planning, before school, or after school. Students may also acquire intern hours during the summer if approved by all vested parties.

Problem Statement

As students successfully fulfill the requirements for a MSA degree, the six completed Service Leadership Projects are encompassed in an electronic portfolio. Students complete the Service Leadership Projects and obtain the MSA degree. Are the students fully prepared to lead a school in educational leadership after completing the program? There are three major questions that will be addressed during this program evaluation that will respond to this overarching question. The first major question is what are the benefits of having to complete Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree? The second question is what are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects? The third question is what are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program? These three research questions will guide the focus of this program evaluation.

Framing the Problem of Practice

School principals and other school leaders face an astounding amount of tasks and challenges when they come into the role. The trials they face on a daily basis can be very diverse in nature. According to Niche Training *Aims to Fill Gaps: Specialized Principal-Training Programs Are Part of a Growing Effort to Prepare School Leaders for Real-World Challenges* (2017), aspiring principals must learn to cope with the most challenging issues once they are actually in their schools. For many, that is not good enough.

New principals struggle with meeting the needs of their unique circumstances. Some are faced with ensuring students have an equitable learning environment. This can be difficult when

student populations are mostly minority and the teachers are not. Equity is difficult to address as a new principal with inadequate training on the subject. Exposing equity issues in dealing with achievement data is also a difficult task for a new principal to undertake if the person was not specifically exposed to this type of circumstance while training (Niche Training Aims to Fill Gaps: Specialized Principal-Training Programs Are Part of a Growing Effort to Prepare School Leaders for Real-World Challenges, 2017).

Many states have worked to change principal preparation programs in order to produce more fully prepared school leaders. States such as Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, and Louisiana have worked to establish new state standards for graduate programs that specialize in educational leadership. These states are pushing the programs to better prepare future school leaders to actually lead school improvement practices. Many states have changed their mindset when it comes to training school leaders. Historically, students were trained by taking certain courses to complete the program requirements. Many are now focusing on mastering certain skills instead (Archer, 2006). Studies have shown, the coursework offered through principal preparation programs is not in sync with the current demands of public education. There is a higher need for programs to effectively train qualified educational leaders that can go in schools and raise student achievement levels. Programs should include a combination of coursework and field experiences (Holloman, Rouse, Ringler, & Bradshaw, 2007).

There are more than 700 different programs in the United States preparing future principals. Many view the way universities typically approach preparing principals as not fully meeting the needs of what it will take to become a future school leader. Educators have reported the programs offered by universities do not coincide with what they are actually faced with once they become leaders of a school. The programs are not up to date and do not provide the learning

experience necessary to become an effective school leader (Following the Leaders: An Analysis of Graduate Effectiveness from Five Principal Preparation Programs, 2016).

Every school year, 22% of principals are either retiring or resigning from the profession. As these principals vacate their positions, it is necessary to fill their seats. This puts school districts in positions where they are faced with the decision of promoting a person from within, or districts may hire a new person. The face of the principal profession has changed. It is more common for a principal of a city school to leave. Elementary and middle school principals are more likely to stay in the profession. Many principals will leave fairly early in their careers, somewhere between the third and fifth year. Principals are coming into the role younger and with considerably less experience in the field. This new generation of principal does not feel as if they have been adequately prepared to manage the daily struggles of being a school leader (Developing Leaders: The Importance-and the Challenges-of Evaluating Principal Preparation Programs, 2016).

As the face of the principal position becomes younger and more inexperienced, it is imperative the leaders are trained effectively. Principals are responsible for student achievement. Principals are responsible for ensuring equity amongst the students in the building in which they serve. As more and more principals retire or leave the profession altogether, it is even more important to ensure the next generation is prepared to step up to the challenge of leading and growing the future. School achievement is one of the most discussed topics in today's society. Accountability is the highest it has ever been for principals. It is imperative we evaluate how principals are being prepared (Ringler, Rouse, & St. Clair, 2012).

Significance of the Study

ECU has not always utilized the model of establishing Service Learning as the basis of the MSA program. Service Learning Projects are the very center of the program and all learning revolves around the various projects that will be completed during the program. The nature of the program is compatible with an evaluation approach. It will be necessary to collect qualitative data to effectively evaluate the program. As the effectiveness of a program of this nature is dealing directly with people, it will be necessary to conduct interviews to obtain the information needed to conduct an efficient evaluation. It is also important to note the program is delivered in two different ways, as students have the option of attending full time as well as part time. Therefore, the experience may vary depending upon the delivery method and the incorporation of both types of student is vital in determining program effectiveness.

The outcomes ECU must achieve in order to be successful for this particular program is producing effective school leaders. Upon fulfilling the necessary requirements to obtain the MSA degree, the student should be adequately prepared to accept a position in school leadership and be an effective leader. In order to obtain this favorable outcome, certain activities must be completed beforehand. The student must successfully complete coursework as well as internship hours. This process can vary depending on if the student is full time or part time. The student must also complete the six required Service Leadership Projects the program centers around. The projects must be approved by the student's advisor before it is uploaded into the electronic portfolio. These are non-negotiable activities the Department of Educational Leadership has put in place in order to obtain the necessary outcome that is their goal.

In order for the student to be successful in completing the necessary requirements, there are several inputs that must be put into place. The student will need reliable, responsive

professors to guide them as they embark upon their respective journeys. The professor must be willing to be available to answer questions and provide feedback to the student. The student must also have a willing district in which to participate. The district must be willing to support the student in their efforts in completing the required activities. Within the district, a willing principal mentor must also be in place for the student. The principal mentor will serve as the point of contact for the student in the school in which the student is completing the necessary projects. The principal mentor and the student's advisor from the university will maintain contact throughout the course of the process. The inputs and successful completion of the required activities are necessary in reaching the desired outcome of producing an effective school leader.

Study Design

The purpose of conducting an evaluation on the principal preparation program ECU offers is to determine the effectiveness of the current practices employed by the university. This evaluation will center upon local effectiveness. It is of the utmost importance students that are part of the program are being adequately prepared to fulfill leadership roles upon completing the program. Students must be prepared to accept the everyday challenges that are a part of the school environment. When the former student enters the office of principal or assistant principal, it is vital they understand what they are supposed to do, how they are supposed to act, and how to face adversity. The student must be fully prepared to successfully fulfill the obligations they will accept when taking the position.

Another important part of the evaluation will include discovering any additional areas participants feel the program is lacking in preparing them for real world situations as they accept leadership roles in schools. The findings will be significant to the Department of Educational Leadership at ECU in ensuring they are adequately preparing future leaders as well as taking

suggestions from past participants and incorporating them in educating participants in the program in the future. As society is steadily changing, so are schools. Keeping abreast with the current environments in which school leaders are immersed in is an important piece of managing an effective preparation program. This evaluation will provide insight into the current state of affairs in schools and whether or not the student felt adequately trained to handle the challenges, pressures, and decisions they face daily. It will also provide ample opportunity for former students to discuss areas in which they were not adequately trained to fulfill the expectations they faced after completing the program. These concepts and ideas are central to the evaluation. The stakeholders that will be affected include professors that educate in the Department of Educational Leadership as well as the future students that will be accepted into the program.

Limitations

When conducting the study, there were limitations. The first limitation included the participants' reluctance to complete the entire study. The survey portion of the study had a total of fourteen participants. The survey was delivered via Google Forms and was completed in an online format. The second portion of the study was the interview process. During this process, only twelve of the fourteen participants committed to complete the interview. Therefore, data was collected from the survey from the original fourteen participants, but data was just collected from twelve participants for the interview process. Participants in two situations either were not at their particular school or had moved prior to the delivery of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey in 2018. Therefore, the information from that school was excluded from that data measure. It is also important to note that the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey can be utilized as a tool for teachers to express their displeasure with an administrator for various reasons. For example, if an administrator had to coach a particular

teacher and the teacher was not happy with the process, this is an opportunity for the teacher to express their frustrations in an anonymous format.

In order to conduct an effective evaluation, it will be necessary to conduct in depth interviews with various participants of the MSA program. Participants must be assured of confidentiality so they will speak freely and without inhibition. Fiscally speaking, the evaluation will be rather inexpensive to conduct, only accruing travel expense. However, if it becomes difficult to obtain interviews with former participants, a stipend may be necessary to attract participation. A series of questions will be developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program as well as an opportunity for the participant to speak freely and candidly regarding areas in which they feel the program could use improvement. The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey will also be utilized as a means to gather data. The data collected from the survey will focus on the leadership questions the teachers are asked. The North Carolina School Report Card will also be utilized as a method to gather necessary data. The strands related to school performance and student growth will be the indicators gathered from the particular schools where the participant served in a leadership role. After gathering the necessary data, it will be organized and analyzed. The data will will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the principal preparation program that ECU uses to ensure productive leaders are ready to enter the profession. The ultimate goal will be to determine whether the present day program is effective and to deliver any recommendations that could possibly benefit the program. The findings will be presented and turned over to ECU upon the completion of the evaluation.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Principal Preparation Programs

School achievement is one of the most discussed topics in today's society. Whether it be from a political standpoint, or a social one, school achievement is on the forefront of what matters most to the public. The principal of a school directly impacts school achievement. Even though the principal is not typically involved in instructing students directly, the role the principal plays is nonetheless crucial to student success. A strong principal may impact school achievement in a positive way, while a less effective principal may negatively impact a school's progress. Principals are considered the number two factor in school achievement, coming only behind direct classroom instruction. Therefore, the two most important roles in a child's education are the teacher and the principal. It is clear a good principal is a fundamental factor in school achievement. It has been harder to determine how to train effective principals (Following the Leaders: An Analysis of Graduate Effectiveness from Five Principal Preparation Programs, 2016).

There are many preparation programs across the country. Even though it is a requirement in most places for future principals to complete a preparation program in order to obtain licensure, the programs can be very diverse from state to state. There is a great deal of concern among various stakeholders regarding the implementation of the programs. The people want to know if the programs are preparing future principals to make a positive impact on student learning. Due to recent legislation, more attention is being placed on the actual quality of the programs being offered to future administrators. Therefore, evaluation methods are being discussed that would help determine whether the current systems in place are working to prepare

future school leaders (Developing Leaders: The Importance-and the Challenges-of Evaluating Principal Preparation Programs, 2016).

Since the principal plays such a crucial role in school achievement, it is necessary to ensure principals are adequately prepared to face the challenges that will be presented as they shoulder the burden of being responsible for an entire school. Much emphasis has been placed on training teachers over the years. Preparing principals should be equally as important. Across the country, there are many different types of preparatory programs in place designed to produce effective school leaders. In *New Leaders Why Principal Program Evaluation is Important* (2016), the following is discussed:

Truly improving the quality of school leaders requires improving the way principals are prepared and selected (The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training, 2012). Program evaluation can serve many purposes: supporting program improvement, communicating the value of the program to internal and external stakeholders, and holding the program accountable for results. (p. 1)

Evaluating principal preparation programs is not simply finding fault with current procedures that are in place. It is about collecting the necessary data needed to help improve the process of preparing principals. To determine what needs improvement, evaluations must be conducted. It is necessary to ask the hard questions and look critically at present conditions and circumstances. After the data is collected and recommendations are determined, it then becomes paramount the facilitators of the respective programs are open minded about the results and the possibility of implementing necessary changes to better the program.

The United States Department of Education has tried periodically over the years to revamp programs that are responsible for administrator preparation. From 1987-1993, the

Department of Education's Leadership in Educational Administration Development initiative was in place. The Danforth Foundation's Principals Preparation Program was also in place during this time. However, both of these initiatives achieved only short term success. Many leaders across the nation believe administrator training is not conducive to the reality they face once they embrace the role of school leader. The programs do not adequately prepare future administrators for the challenges they will face (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

The need is great for performing evaluations on principal preparation programs. It is of tremendous value to be able to actually measure how a principal impacts various components in a school setting. This is even more relevant to those programs that are trying to be more effective in producing more capable leaders. The leaders of these particular programs want to know and follow up on how their students have performed once completing the training and how they measure up comparatively speaking with participants of other programs. It is also of value to have the data to report back to those that have a vested interest in producing results (New Leaders Why Principal Program Evaluation is Important, 2016).

The principal of a school has the capacity to impact hundreds of lives a year. This type of influence is of grave importance when discussing the future. The job of a principal is all consuming and encompasses many different categories. In Leadership Matters (National Association of Elementary Principals, 2013), the following was reported:

In today's climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. They need to be educational visionaries; instructional and curriculum leaders; assessment experts; disciplinarians; community builders; public relations experts; budget analysts; facility managers; special program administrators; and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are

expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. (p. 2)

With the various responsibilities the principal must be prepared for before accepting a position, it is essential for preparation programs to fully educate the future leaders on the intricacies of the job. It is even more important to ensure the programs are fully meeting the needs of the participants, with the ever increasing demands being placed upon today's principal.

A study was conducted in South Carolina that found more than 25% of the teachers agreed that leadership was the most fundamental reason behind whether or not they chose to stay at a particular school. Maryland teachers also agreed that leadership accounted for the reasoning behind them staying at their current school. It has also been found that beginning teachers have a much smoother transition into teaching if they are working for an effective leader. Competent leaders make it easier for teachers to come to them with their concerns, questions, and problems. This type of leader will make the time to discuss with new teachers whatever is bothering them and will help them work through their respective problems. The effective leader will use this as an opportunity to coach and guide the beginning teacher and help them come up with solutions for their problems. Teacher retention is an essential part of a principal's job description. Principals must be properly trained and prepared to handle situations of this nature in order to be successful. Therefore, principal preparation programs must address these issues when prepping future school administrators (National Association of Elementary Principals, 2013).

There is no question of the value of principal preparation programs. Principals are vital to a school's achievement. In order for a principal to reach their full potential, they must be properly trained in their profession. To ensure this training is taking place, program evaluations

are necessary. The program evaluation's purpose is to measure the effectiveness and to gather any additional information that could possibly benefit the program in the future. This information would then be turned over to the facilitators of the program to implement as they see fit.

Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs

Many students are completing principal preparation programs that are not ready to accept school leadership positions. The program they completed did not successfully prepare the student to lead a school. This fact is concerning to states that are primarily focused on school achievement. Therefore, it becomes a necessity to evaluate the programs to gauge their effectiveness in training future school administrators. The state government is primarily responsible for overseeing the evaluation process. State government has the authority to set the guidelines for programs to operate and they also issue the license that is required for school administrators. They can operate evaluations that measure the quality of a program and they can also use the data that is accumulated to implement change to better the programs (UCEA and New Leaders, 2016).

Research shows that most principal preparation programs are lacking in fundamental elements necessary for preparing school leaders. Because of the intensified scrutiny on the principal preparation programs, standards were changed for educational leaders on a national level. The primary shift in the standards occurred by focusing more intensely on instructional standards instead of managerial standards (Jones & Ringler, 2018). Jones and Ringler (2018) state the following:

“Principal’s instructional leadership skills were found to be key to influencing student success and teacher effectiveness in schools. An effective instructional leader facilitates a learning environment in their schools where students are challenged to succeed and

teachers continuously grow in the art of teaching. The craft of instructional leadership is complex and encompasses many skills.

States are receiving funding under the Every Student Succeeds Act and they may use this funding to help support principals. There are states that are trying to improve principal preparation programs by utilizing these monies as well as funding received through the Higher Education Act. One such way the funding is aiding future school leaders is by conducting more overall program reviews. They are also beginning to seek out the students after they graduate. It has been determined that graduates of the programs can provide useful feedback regarding the current state of principal preparation programs. The states have also started a more rigorous candidate selection process. They are now looking into the candidates' past teaching ability. The programs are attempting to recruit the best teachers with the most effective records. Another tactic many states are employing are registering cohorts of students together. These cohorts will go through the program together. The goal is for the candidates to form relationships and a sense of camaraderie, making it a journey they will complete together. The states are also mandating all programs have the same criteria. For example, if a student attends a part time program, they will still be accountable for the same amount of work and training as a full time student. These states are also ensuring candidates have a certain skill base before they are allowed licensure (Clifford, 2016).

Research was conducted that found most states do not incorporate all of the aforementioned policies. However, there are a number of states that do have certain laws in place in regards to principal preparation programs. It has been found Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee are leading the way with the most policies in place to effectively train school administrators. There are other states like Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Iowa,

Massachusetts, Georgia, Florida, Connecticut, and California that have addressed many of these innovative policies in their legislation (Clifford, 2016).

As programs are being evaluated, one of the most important pieces of the process is the ability to gain knowledge that will lend itself to program improvement. In UCEA and New Leaders (2016), evaluation programs must be able to provide feedback about what the program is doing well and what is lacking in the program. The feedback must be actionable and the facilitators must be able to implement practical suggestions. After the feedback is given, the program administrators must be allowed the necessary time needed to make the changes or the additions that was recommended (UCEA and New Leaders, 2016, p. 4).

States have the authority to hold programs accountable for their lack of effectiveness in preparing future school leaders. The state can go in and rate programs based on their inefficiencies. The state has three possible choices they can consider when rating principal preparation programs. The state has the choice of putting a program on an improvement plan if the program is deemed lacking. The state can altogether banish the program if it is declared unsalvageable or the state can approve a program to continue preparing future leaders. In UCEA and New Leaders (2016), the following was stated,

In order to be able to rate the programs fairly, states can consider the following characteristics of system design: (1) understand the limitations of the indicators being tracked as measures of quality, and ensure that there is sufficient and valid information for making consequential decisions; (2) develop a clear and transparent rating system that has enough levels to meaningfully differentiate performance across programs and that captures performance and improvement over time; and (3) develop a clear and

transparent process and timeline for intervening in the event of unacceptable performance. (p. 4)

States should consider these different approaches when evaluating a programs efficiency. The rubric states use to determine if the program is suitable must be clear and concise for facilitators to understand as they are attempting to improve the quality of their various programs. The state must give program leads a fair timeline to improve the quality of their programs if they are lacking. The same system is in place for improving teachers. The state gives teachers time to improve if they are considered developing. This is a comparable situation. As a principal steps in to aid a teacher if they are underperforming, the state will step in with guidance for programs that are performing below expectation.

States have been recently called upon to make sure the principal preparation programs are in fact preparing principals to be successful. Principal success oftentimes equates to student achievement. If the schools are underperforming the public is not happy. The public will in turn voice their concerns to their local representatives. The representatives will take their constituents concerns back to the capital for consideration. Many evaluation programs focus on the outcomes of the preparation programs. For the most part, the outcomes vary very little amongst the different types of programs (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2016).

When discussing outcomes, the most important measure is student achievement. Whether it is elementary or secondary, public or private, student achievement is the hottest topic amongst the people. If the children are not succeeding, that is a direct correlation to success of the future. The public takes these topics extremely seriously and if students are not succeeding, the principal will undoubtedly get the blame. Graduation rates are also an important outcome that evaluations may measure when overviewing a program. Whether or not a principal is successful in

improving graduation rates, or keeping the rates steady if they are already in a good place is an indicator of principal effectiveness. If the graduation rates drop, the principal will be the one to shoulder the burden. Teacher retention is another common measure of gauging the effectiveness of a school leader. Teachers are more likely to continue working for a leader they believe is effective and making a difference in the lives of their students. Teachers also are more likely to stay with a leader that makes time to guide and assist them in problematic situations. Teachers want to stay with leaders they can trust and rely upon (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2016).

When evaluating principal preparation programs, there are many factors to consider. It can be difficult to conduct an effective evaluation, as much of the data can be viewed as subjective. When a principal just begins at a new school, it is impossible to blame the principal for all of the problems the school has if the school does not have a successful year. It may take three to five years for a principal to truly make an impact in a particular school. All schools have their unique needs and challenges. Some schools face more trying situations than others. It may take longer for a principal to make a difference in some schools. Because all situations are different, and the data can be impossibly skewed, it is difficult to definitively determine the effectiveness of particular principal preparation programs. However, it is possible to evaluate from particular points of view, as long as the evaluation is transparent and the rubrics are clear to all stakeholders.

Principal Preparation Pedagogies

When a newly licensed school administrator accepts their first position as an assistant principal or as a principal, they are often expected to possess more knowledge than what they may actually have been exposed to at this early point in their career. Everyone that has a stake in the school will hold the principal responsible for what occurs in the building, whether the person

was adequately prepared or not. The new administrator is expected to have a concise, clear understanding of the expectations of the role. More times than not, the novice leader is ill prepared for what awaits them (Walker & Qian, 2006).

In order for new leaders to be more fully prepared for the role of school administrator, it is important to discuss differing strategies principal preparation programs employ to accomplish the task of better preparing future principals. Programs vary from state to state, and most are mandated by their respective state governments. However, there are commonalities that can be seen when reviewing various strategies employed by different programs. All programs have the same goal they are working to accomplish. The goal is producing excellent administrators that can effectively operate schools. This includes helping students succeed and all that entails. Many programs have become much more selective in the candidate selection process. Some programs are delving deeper into a candidate's teaching history to determine how effective they were in the classroom. The mindset for this strategy is an effective teacher can be transformed into an effective leader. At times candidates may be asked to share meaningful experiences from their teaching career. They may be asked results oriented questions and be probed as to how they achieved the results. Candidates may be asked to view videos observing teachers. They may be asked to rate the teacher and provide useful feedback for the lesson they observed. This is also a screener some universities have implemented when choosing candidates (Kelemen & Fenton, 2016).

After the candidates are selected, the training process will begin. This process will look different in various places, depending upon state requirements. It has been noted that since 2000, almost all of the states across the country have changed the requirements for principal preparation programs. Historically, candidates in principal preparation programs were assigned

specific courses to complete and were given some type of assessment after the completion of the required courses. Many states have now centered the programs around learning leadership standards. Almost half of the states in the country are also requiring mentors for new principals. These are all progressive strategies in better preparing future school leaders (The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training, 2012).

The first step in preparing principals is understanding the process is not just about managing a building. Future principals have to be prepared for leading school change and improving instruction within the building. Principal preparation programs are now seeking out partnerships with neighboring school districts. They are attempting to learn more about what localities are in need of and providing the student with more hands on opportunities to learn. Much more is now expected of the aspiring leader than in the past. Future principals must be ready to make necessary changes in buildings that will produce better teaching and learning for students. They must also learn how to change school climate if necessary in order to support these reform standards. Future leaders must learn to communicate with staff and analyze student data to more fully understand what the school needs. The school leader must then share that information out in a way that will not alienate staff. The goal would be to guide and coach teachers in improving their craft. Principal preparation programs are now implementing techniques where students are able to be exposed to this type of learning environment (The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training, 2012). Jones and Ringler (2017) stated the following:

“Research has found that for principal preparation programs to develop school leaders that are able to meet the needs of racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students, they must shift from the current practices. One recommendation for

improving principal preparation programs is to integrate social justice knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout the curriculum rather than offer one, add-on course.”

Principal preparation programs have gotten away from simply professor lectures and coursework. New strategies include building partnerships that will foster the development of the new leader. It is important for the student to learn the theory, but they must also have the opportunity to put the theory to action. Experience has become a much more important strategy programs are employing to better prepare their students. Internships are an important part of applying the concepts learned while completing necessary coursework. The internship experience gives the student the chance to fully put their newfound knowledge to the test. Programs give the student the opportunity to learn theory, different leadership styles, change styles, and necessary concepts in order to be an effective leader. The student will then receive the chance to go through the essential experiences it will take to evolve into an effective leader (Darling-Hammond, LaPoInte, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007).

One approach to making the principal preparation process more meaningful is by applying the service learning concept to the curriculum as well as field experience. Service learning has become a more popular approach in recent years in preparing future teachers as well as principals for the roles they will fulfill as they complete the necessary graduation requirements. What is service learning exactly? Bates, Dritis, Allen, and McCandless (2009) state the following:

Service learning is an instructional approach that engages students in service-related activities while connecting the experience to course curricula so students have the opportunity to learn academic content while applying that knowledge in service to their

community. This model is predicated on student involvement and student ownership of the experience to make it meaningful and personally relevant. (p. 1)

Service Learning

Service learning is a strategy utilized to immerse the student in worthwhile field experiences while doing good works for the assigned school. All districts have individual needs. Schools that make up districts have their own individual needs as well. Service learning requires partnerships between the student, the students' professors, the mentor, and the district. The goal is for the student to take the knowledge they have learned through coursework and apply it to real world situations, all the while helping fulfill a need of the school. Thus, the student is providing a service to the district in which they are volunteering, but they are also learning during the process (Bates, Drita, Alen, & McCandless, 2009).

ECU utilizes service learning as a way to better prepare future school leaders for the challenges they will most certainly face. ECU is thoroughly committed to service learning and believes it is an important component to becoming an effective leader. The university partners with neighboring school districts to allow the student the opportunity to go into the schools and help. The student is essentially helping the principal with a current issue the school is facing. The student will fulfill all of the background information and research required and will work to develop a recommendation for the principal in hopes of helping to solve the problem. The student will then be given ample opportunity to reflect upon the entire process. The reflection piece is just as important as the practice. The reflection process allows the student to open up freely about the mistakes that were made along the journey. The student does not have to be wary because confidentiality is ensured between the student and the professor. At the end of the process, the student has had a chance to apply knowledge in a real world situation. It is an

opportunity afforded to the student by the university in which the student can grow as a leader (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021). Holloman and Novey (2018) state the following:

“The PPP professors are committed to preparing and supporting the current and future school leaders in its region, so the leaders can, in turn, transform the schools and communities where they serve. PPP professors believe transformational leadership starts with serving others, and therefore, the PPP leadership training starts with service opportunities within schools and districts.”

Principal preparation programs offer a variety of strategies to better prepare their students for the leadership role. These strategies begin with candidate selection. Typically, after the candidate selection process, the programs offer a mixture of instruction and real world experience. Instruction is essential in providing students a common framework in which to grow and progress. After students are exposed to curriculum, experience must be provided so the student can apply the knowledge they have acquired. Applying the knowledge is of extreme value to prospective leader. It is in this setting, students can fully understand and appreciate what they are learning and if it is the right fit for them. Programs are mandated by state government and most states are leaning toward requiring programs to ensure students are learning the necessary leadership standards it will take in order to be a successful school leader. Today, principals are responsible for so much more than managing a building. Learning how to lead must be a part of today’s principal preparation programs.

Samples of Principal Preparation Programs

Every state has methods they utilize to ensure school leaders are sufficiently trained to operate schools. Again, the ultimate goal is to certify competent, highly trained individuals that

are capable in leading a school efficiently and effectively. Different states have different formulas they implement to arrive at their desired results. We will use this opportunity to explore different programs from various states.

The state of Georgia believes field experiences are of the utmost importance when training future school leaders. It is believed the practice they receive in the field is necessary to link the knowledge the students receive in the classroom. Field experiences offered in Georgia have been evaluated for effectiveness. After the evaluation was completed, it was noted that Georgia was moving toward requiring students to participate in field experiences for at least two or three semesters. Some districts do require students have principal mentors during the process. It was found many do focus on the reflection piece of the field experience process and consider it a necessity. It was found that field experience was a valuable part of the program, however, it was difficult to supervise. Professors were not always capable of effectively monitoring the field experience. The principal mentor was an important part of the equation as well, but it was also discovered oftentimes the principal mentor delegated their responsibilities to their assistant principal. This is not always ideal as the assistant principal may not understand the overarching vision of the school as the principal does. All of the programs in Georgia do require at least some type of field experience in order to complete the certification process (Tubbs, 2008).

The field experiences offered in Kentucky were also evaluated. Surveys were conducted in order to better understand the effectiveness of the field experiences offered in Kentucky's principal preparation programs. The surveys were mailed out to Kentucky's over 900 school principals. The return rate was approximately 30%. Kentucky does require all of its principal preparation programs to offer field experiences for its students. Kentucky realized the need for better preparing principals for their roles. They also understood it was necessary for highly

trained leaders to help turn around the schools that were underperforming. In order to produce highly trained leaders, field experiences were required. Most principals that completed the survey agreed the field experiences helped them to become more prepared for their roles. The field experiences varied as to whether or not the student selected the specific experience or the principal mentor selected the experience for the student. Principals were asked which type of field experience benefitted them the most during their training process. The majority responded that the experiences that involved leading an activity were the most beneficial in their trainings. All respondents agreed if they were not exposed to field experiences during their preparation period, they would have liked to have had them. Most respondents also agreed the most helpful field experiences were those the student and principal mentor jointly decided upon, not the experiences that were dictated by the university. They agreed field experiences were an important part of the preparation process (Dodson, 2014).

Some programs are trying hard to integrate coursework with field experiences. At Delta State University in Mississippi, the professors actually teach the content future principals must know around issues that are currently unfolding during the students' internship. There is a direct correlation between what they are learning in their college classes and what they are experiencing on their internship site. Issues are discussed in a collaborative setting with students participating and offering their ideas and suggestions. Students also have to complete Clinical Correlations during the training process. The student must relate their experiences back to what they are learning throughout their coursework. All goals may not necessarily be met during the course of one semester. If that is the case, the student will receive a grade of "IP," which means "In Progress." The student will continue with the work and receive a completed grade the next semester (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The University of Connecticut has worked to streamline their Administrator Preparation program as well. The program had been disjointed, as coursework was firmly in one section and the internship in another. There was not adequate correlation between the coursework and the internship previously. The overseers of the program have worked to ensure the coursework and the internship experience makes sense and flows together for participants of the program. The student is immediately paired up with a school and the student will remain with the school for the entire two years of the program. The student will be apprised of the challenges their particular school is facing in the beginning. Then, everything the student does for the next two years will center on their particular school. They will circle all of their learning back to the experiences they are completing in the field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Illinois worked to transform principal preparation after the 2005 Levine report was released. This report impacted the entire country in that it called for change in how we prepare educational leaders. After the report was released, Illinois changed the way they prepared their principals. The Wallace Foundation reported the ways the state worked to better prepare their leaders. In 2010, the state passed many educational reforms that were to be fully implemented by 2014. At this point, all of the leadership programs in Illinois are in compliance with the new standards. The Wallace Foundation along with the Robert R. McCormick Foundation funded a study conducted by the Illinois Education Research Council and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research to determine how the new preparation programs are developing. There were many changes that took place in the principal preparation programs. One of the biggest changes came in the form of the actual certificate a candidate received at the end of the program. The certificate changed from a general administrative certificate to a more streamlined certificate that was specifically used for principals and assistant principals. Because of this

important change, many other changes took place as well. Applegate and Holt (2016) state the following:

A strong emphasis on preparing instructional leaders. Ensuring that every prepared school leader had preparation in special populations: early childhood, English language learners and students with disabilities. A more selective admissions process to ensure that candidates were truly interested in being principals, not just wanting to get general administrative preparation or have the credential to “move up the pay scale.” More formal partnerships with school districts for program delivery and design. Mentorship by highly qualified principal mentors. An extensive internship experience that requires the candidate to demonstrate mastery of many competencies. The new internship experience is a move away from a more observational role to one in which the candidates are leading instructional activities. (p. 2)

The study concentrated on the reforms made in Illinois over a two-year time period. After the study was complete, 70% of the program directors did believe they were producing more qualified leaders. This approach took the programs away from the traditional route of preparing school administrators by having them read text for the majority of the time and pushed them to have more hands-on experience (Applegate & Holt, 2016).

Illinois recognizes the new initiatives have brought about positive reform, but there are also problems that have to be addressed as well. As programs have concentrated more fully on preparing a strong instructional leader, their have been complaints other aspects of the job have been overlooked, that perhaps the programs are not fully preparing the future administrators for what they will face when take over the position. Examples such as learning how to be fiscally responsible and how to actually manage a building are areas of concern. Also, because of the

more stringent admission requirements, enrollment has been low in certain programs causing suspension of one in particular. Illinois looked at the issues and has worked to address the problems moving forward (Applegate & Holt, 2016).

Mississippi also felt as if they should take a harder look at the way the state was preparing their future principals. Schools were coming under attack for low performance. The easiest person to blame for the schools underperforming is the school principal. In Mississippi, there are two ways to become a principal. There is the more traditional way and then an alternate way that is similar to the way the cohort is done in North Carolina. The state wanted to take a deeper look at its eight different programs and track the effectiveness of the principals, depending upon whether they became a principal through the traditional method or the alternate route. The study concluded there was no real difference in student achievement whether the principal went through the traditional program or the alternative. The study did have suggestions to better align the programs and offer better resources to the future principals (Bolden, 2014).

When preparing principals for an urban experience, a different approach may be necessary. Urban areas often have a more difficult time attracting high quality leaders for their schools. At times, the salary between being a teacher and being a principal is not worth the headache to come out of the classroom and take on the additional responsibility. It has been identified that a strong partnership between the school district and the university needs to be maintained and nurtured in order to produce effective leaders. The idea is for the district to help recruit the potential candidates that would be a good fit for the principal preparation program and for the university to guide and support the candidate through the journey of becoming ready to lead. The School District of Philadelphia partnered with two different universities to make this happen for future leaders (Kaimal, Barber, Schulman, & Reed, 2012).

The School District of Philadelphia and Lehigh University and Temple University established a partnership to better prepare future school leaders. The National Association of Secondary School Principals also joined in the collaboration. The stakeholders did not just form a temporary partnership, they formed a much broader in depth organization that involved many people. They developed an advisory board that consisted of people that could high effective mentors for the future principals. The organization focused on five different domains. These domains were: structures and routines, capacity, domains, belief systems, and power and legitimacy. These domains would be the foundation of the partnership, all coming together for one common purpose. The purpose is preparing effective leaders for the School District of Philadelphia (Kaimal et al., 2012).

This program recruited teachers that were already proven to be effective. These teachers were committed to their students and they new how to navigate the urban area. There were three different tracks a teacher could take to complete the requirements. The first track was for teachers that wanted to be principals. This would take approximately two years for them to complete. This track was for “aspiring leaders.” The second track was for teachers that already had their principal certification and it would only take them one year to complete the program. This track was for “developing leaders.” The third track was for any new principal or assistant principal that needed additional support. This track was for “emerging leaders.” The partnership provided the candidates with experiences that would help strengthen them as instructional leaders, help them develop their own leadership skills, provide hands-on experiences through an internship that would be customized, and it would also make sure the candidate was paired with an effective mentor. The focus would always be preparing the candidate to be an effective leader in an urban setting. Each partner had an important role to play in ensuring a successful

experience for the candidate. It was up to the district to recruit the candidates that had the most potential. The universities would provide the curriculum to ensure the student would be credited, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals would ensure the candidate was paired with an effective mentor and would also make sure the candidate would be ready for their skills assessment. There have been many challenges the partnership has faced since establishing this program. It has been an effective tool to recruit and train principals for the urban area of Philadelphia, but it is a work in progress (Kaimel et al., 2012).

Rural areas also have their fair share of challenges in preparing future principals for their schools. As schools have been criticized for not performing adequately, the states have called for reform in preparing future leaders. Programs have been redesigned to more effectively prepare future principals. According to Cameron (2012), principals were surveyed in the Northwestern part of the United States. These survey results brought forth important information. The results stated:

Several areas in rural school leaders need additional training and support regarding instructional leadership (building a team commitment, creating a learning organization, sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement, setting instructional direction-results orientation, communicating effectively, facilitating the change process). In addition to skills needed to lead instruction, rural school principals have indicated needing help with recruiting and retaining high quality teachers for rural areas, having available mentors, and building awareness of community in rural schools.” (p. 2)

The principals in this area clearly needed support they had not received in many different areas. Their training was lacking and there was a call for change to help support the struggling

administrators. One area would attempt to address the concern and form collaborative partnerships within the area (Cameron, 2012).

When this process started, many surveys were sent out to principals, assistant principals, and superintendents to find out the way they felt about instructional leadership. The participants had to include their demographical information as well. When the survey results were collected, which clearly showed the rural area administrators needed further the support, the next step of the process began. The results were utilized in an effort to choose the partners that would best benefit the school leaders. The chosen partners were notified by email and then a phone call where the collaboration effort could be more fully discussed. This partnership extended to include principals, superintendents as well as professors at the university level. The partners worked together to redesign courses, align standards, and provide feedback for the already existing courses in place. The partnership gave voice to many stakeholders as principal preparation programs were redesigned to better fit the needs of emerging leaders in rural areas (Cameron, 2012).

One university in North Carolina is also attempting to groom future school leaders specifically for rural schools. North Carolina State University has formed the Northeast Leadership Academy (NELA) to specifically train students to be prepared to aid in the achievement and success in rural schools. Candidates are chosen for the program that will specialize in training them to be effective in low performing schools. Typically, these schools have a number of obstacles they are facing. Poverty is one of the most tremendous obstacles, which goes along with a lack of resources. The purpose of the Northeast Leadership Academy is to give specialized training to these candidates so they may be dynamic leaders that can go into a

high poverty, low performing school and turn things around. The end goal is for student performance to improve. Edmonds (2017) states the following:

The findings indicate that schools led by first-year NELA-trained principals saw gains in student proficiency and growth. The research participants attributed their impact on student achievement to their NELA preparation. Specifically, the research participants stated NELA training gave them the confidence to be a principal, the skillset and mindset to be resourceful and build relationships, and a growth mind-set in terms of problem solving (p. 1).

Having a program that pinpoints specific needs within an area in a state and addresses those needs with future school leader is a powerful tool for change. As these candidates are trained to function within high poverty, low performing areas they know what to expect from the start and have been groomed to deal with situations effectively and efficiently. Thus, producing the positive results found in the study (Edmonds, 2017).

Different states have different mandates in place in regards to principal preparation programs. Programs may appear different from state to state, but most state sanctioned programs are not aligning themselves with common leadership standards. Most programs deliver a combination of coursework and field experience to the students participating in the program. Some programs offer more field experience opportunities than others. Many programs are now offering internship opportunities for students to participate in during their formal training to become a school leader. Principal mentors are assigned in these situations for the student to be coached along the way as they are working to obtain licensure. Many states are also offering follow up support to principals after they obtain their first leadership position. As states often require additional support for beginning teachers, many are now requiring the same support for

beginning principals. Producing the most highly effective school leader in the most efficient way is the challenge states are constantly working to overcome.

Enhancing Principal Preparation Programs

An interesting way of viewing strengthening principal preparation programs is focusing on what should not be done. In *How Not to Prepare School Principals* (Davis & Leon, 2011) eight different strategies that many principal preparation programs focus on are discussed as being non effective. It is suggested we must first acknowledge what we are doing wrong, before we can fully make a positive change in program preparation. It is suggested programs should stop focusing on course content knowledge and focus instead on the application of the knowledge in real world situations. It is also suggested professors should not be viewed as the epitome of knowledge when it comes to preparing future leaders. Students should be active participants in their own learning. Emphasis should be placed on the students' experiences as they go through the program, not just learning academic content. Programs should make sure they are aligned with the state's standards based leadership requirements. Students should not be required to complete projects that have little relation to what they will need to know when they become school leaders. Programs should not be afraid to allow students to learn collaboratively and they should also account for the different learning needs of all students. Programs should not get so caught up in teaching technical skills they forget to teach the other necessary skills students will need in order to be successful. Programs should also focus more on the concept of team building instead of the individual.

The eight different suggestions that were made about what programs should not be doing is an effective way to understand the current needs of students and what is simply a waste of time. As principal preparation programs are molding future leaders, it is imperative to take note

of what is working and what is not. As times change, it has become more acceptable for the team concept in efficiently running a school. It has become acknowledged that one person simply cannot manage all of the pieces alone. It does take a team to effectively manage and lead a school. As programs educated students, this is an important concept to incorporate. It is acceptable to not be able to do it all alone. It is necessary to build a team of trustworthy members and empower them with responsibilities. As times have changed, it has become more important for students to learn necessary skills when leading schools, not just terms from textbooks. It has also become even more important for students to obtain field experience as they are completing the program. Students should be given the opportunity to apply the knowledge in real world situations. Programs should also aid students in learning to deal with people. The managing piece is only a small part of what it takes to becoming an effective leader. Students must learn how to communicate and build relationships with the people they will be responsible for managing. An effective program must spend time preparing students for the challenges they will face in dealing with actual people (Davis & Leon, 2011).

As principal preparation programs continue to try to better prepare tomorrow's leaders, it is essential they be reflective in their practice. Taking stock in what is working and what is not working is an important piece of the preparation puzzle. It has been well studied and documented about what makes an effective principal. In *Preparing Principals as Instructional Leaders: Perceptions of University Faculty, Expert Principals, and Expert Teacher Leaders* (Backor & Gordon, 2015) it is noted:

A study by Bamburg and Andrews (1990) examined the link between instructional leadership and student learning. They found that principals at high-achieving schools were:

- Sought out by teachers for instructional guidance
- Able to clearly and effectively communicate instructional goals
- Visible on campus
- Active participants in staff development
- Recognized by teachers as effective instructional leaders

These are characteristics that make an effective leader. It is necessary for programs to instill these traits in their students. Programs may at times get sidelined by teaching administrative competencies. At times there is not enough attention paid to teaching and learning. Principals must be strong in curriculum knowledge and also be able to comprehend what their staff needs as far as professional development. Programs should spend even more time on preparing principals to become instructional leaders.

Evaluating teachers is also an important suggestion for principal preparation programs to incorporate and focus more diligently upon. Teacher evaluation does fall under the category of instructional leadership, but when evaluating a teacher, the human element is also necessary to include. When a principal evaluates a teacher, it should not be simply a snapshot of that one moment in time. It is a commitment the principal makes to the teacher to help guide and coach them into continuous improvement and growth. Evaluations are a method in which the principal can provide coaching to both new and veteran teachers. Principals should be prepared in being able to lead these conversations in a non-threatening environment and in a positive way. Strategies should be taught in principal preparation programs (Backor & Gordon, 2015).

Programs should also teach their students to base their decisions on research. When the student becomes the leader of a school, it will be relatively easy to make impulsive decisions. It will be far easier to go ahead and decide than to spend extra time researching if it is the right

thing to do or not. Programs should instill in their students it is better to make informed decisions. They should also help provide useful strategies students can use in the future (Davis & Jazzar, 2005).

As students are working towards completing the necessary requirements for licensure, the need for having a mentor is paramount. If programs do not provide an opportunity for a student to work with an experienced principal, it is suggested they should make that a possibility for students. A student must be paired with the right mentor. Having an experienced mentor that is dedicated to helping the student grow and succeed can make all the difference in a student's experience. Mentors should be carefully selected and match with students. The student must be able to fully trust their mentor and confide in them during the experience. Mentors can be assigned during the student's field experience. The principal must be willing and motivated to be an integral part of the student's education, or it will not be a successful partnership. However, if the groundwork is properly completed, it can be an extremely positive experience for the student (Service, Dalgic, & Thornton, 2016).

According to Levine (2005), "the quality in our schools has seldom mattered more" (p. 5). The principal has a tremendous amount of pressure to ensure all of the necessary pieces are in place in running a successful school. Studies show that an effective school leader can increase student proficiency points by as much as 19%. In order for school leader to make this type of impact, they must be adequately trained by an effective principal preparation program (Vogel, Weiler, & Armenta, 2014).

Preparing students for future school leadership roles is a daunting task. These preparation programs are generally two years in length and a great deal of learning is required to take place during these two years. Programs have evolved over the years to better match up with state

expectations. Programs must continually assess their effectiveness and ensure they are delivering the best possible education to its students. As programs continually assess, they must consider alternative ways to educate and the need for continually growing and improving their delivery.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

ECU's Department of Educational Leadership specifically utilizes Service Learning Projects to prepare MSA candidates to obtain jobs in educational leadership. The SLP process is designed to produce more effective educational leaders. The process promotes real time training in the faced paced world of school administration. The MSA program at ECU is centered around service learning. The purpose of this program evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the SLP process after candidates have graduated and secured positions in educational leadership. The findings from this study will be shared with the MSA program faculty for the purpose of program improvement.

Program Evaluation Questions

Are the students fully prepared to lead a school in educational leadership after completing the program? There are three major questions that will be addressed during this program evaluation that will respond to this overarching question. The first question will evaluate the benefits of completing Service Learning Projects, "*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree*"? The second evaluation question is, "*What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects*"? The third evaluation question is, "*What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program*"? These three questions will guide the focus of this program evaluation and dictate the various questions that participants will be asked throughout the evaluation process. The questions that have been developed will aid in thoroughly answering the main research questions in performing an effective evaluation. The participants will be asked these questions through interview as well as survey.

Program Evaluation Method

According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (1997), an “evaluation is determining the worth or merit of an evaluation object (whatever is evaluated)” (p. 5). In this particular study, the researcher is focusing on the worth or merit of a program. The program that will be evaluated is a Principal Preparation Program that is utilized at ECU. ECU practices the implementation of Service Leadership Projects as a method of preparing future school leaders. The program evaluation will focus on the merit or worth of the Service Leadership Projects, as it pertains to developing school leaders. Students must complete six SLPs as a requirement for a MSA degree. Each project consists of five sections the student must complete. The first section is the Data Collection and Data Analysis Section. This section helps the student become more familiar with the school in which they are serving. The student will use resources such as the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, NC School Report Card, newspaper articles, and the Data Manager at the school to aid them in completing the first section. In section two the student must identify areas for improvement. The student will be able to complete this section after the data is analyzed from section one. Section three includes the Professional Language Summary. This section includes the research the student will conduct on the area in which the project focuses. Section four includes the Action Plan. This section includes the actions the student will take in order to make an impact at the school and complete the goal of the project. Section five includes the Project Evaluation and Impact Summary. In this section the student evaluates the impact the project had on the summary and reflects upon the implementation process. In this section, the student is allowed the opportunity to discuss the high points as well as the low during this process (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

Through determination, a program evaluation will be conducted. The program evaluation focuses on a participant-oriented approach. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (1997), a participant-oriented approach was “One that stressed firsthand experience with program activities and settings” (p. 154). This evaluation will focus primarily on the firsthand experience of past graduates of the MSA program at ECU.

Mixed Method Design

The program evaluation will consist of a mixed methods framework. This will be used to conduct the study with the qualitative piece given priority. Both quantitative and qualitative will be collected during the survey portion of the study as well as the interview portion of the study. In Creswell (2010) mixed methods is defined as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p. 49). A mixed methods approach is appropriate and will be utilized for expansion in this study. Expansion is the purpose of the mixed methods framework, as the reason for the evaluation is to learn more and apply the results accordingly (Fitzpatrick et al., 1997).

In Clark and Ivankova (2017), mixed methods research is discussed as a way to identify patterns of both quantitative and qualitative data together within one study. When the researcher has access to both types of data within the study, it is possible the results will be more comprehensive than if the researcher were only using one type of data. Considering this study has a substantial qualitative piece with the interviews being a major data point, but also an important quantitative piece with the participants’ schools’ scores being analyzed, the mixed

methods approach made the most sense when deciding upon a framework for this particular study.

Participants

Participants for the qualitative portion of the program evaluation will be past graduates of the MSA program at ECU. Participants will only include students that obtained a job as a principal, assistant principal, or a central office position after graduation. Participants must have also held a job in educational leadership for a minimum of two years to be eligible. Participants will only include graduates that were required to complete Service Leadership Projects and the necessary digital portfolio. Participants will not include previous graduates that were subjected to taking exit exams to obtain licensure in school administration because these students were not required to participate in the Service Leadership Projects. Participants will have graduated from 2012-2015. There were 287 graduates during this time period. The study will aim to include four participants from the elementary field, four participants from middle school, and four participants with high school experience. This is 4.24% of the total number of graduates. It was decided twelve participants would adequately represent the program and enough data could be sufficiently collected.

Data Collection

Data will be collected in four different ways for this study. The first data collection method is the survey. Survey questions will be formulated based on the North Carolina Leadership standards. The survey was designed to discover if the Service Learning Project model was effective in preparing graduates in the North Carolina Leadership standards. The survey will be delivered electronically through google forms. This portion of the data collection process is

expected to take roughly two weeks. The information will be organized into tables that will give a clear understanding of the data collected.

The second data collection method that will be utilized is the interview. The purpose of the interview is to collect the qualitative information needed for the program evaluation. Data will be gathered from approximately twelve different qualified participants. A series of questions will be developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program as well as an opportunity for the participant to speak freely and candidly regarding areas in which they feel the program could use improvement. The Likert scale will be utilized during this phase. The participants' answers will be read and reviewed multiple times. The answers will be (focused) coded and divided into relevant themes. The next two types of data collected are made available to the public by the state.

The third is the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey. Specific questions pertaining to School Leadership will be documented and analyzed from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS). These questions will come from the "School Leadership" section that asks teachers to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about leadership in their schools.

The North Carolina School Report Card will also be utilized as the final data source to complete the study. The specific data strands that address proficiency performance and growth will be collected and analyzed. The proficiency and growth of a school is a factor in determining the effectiveness of a graduate of the MSA program. Each data collection method will be described in detail in the next sections.

The data will be triangulated from each of the four data sources to answer the overarching question of whether or not students are fully prepared to lead a school after

completing the program. From the survey and the interview questions, participants will give their opinions and various viewpoints regarding the training they received in the program and whether or not they felt the program prepared them to lead a school. The interview questions will provide participants the opportunity to discuss any recommendations they may have to better the program in the future. From the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the North Carolina School Report Card, data will be gathered to determine if the participants were prepared to lead a school from the teacher's point of view and also the standards in which schools are measured in the state of North Carolina.

Data Source One

Participants will be involved in the evaluation in two ways. During the first measure, those involved in the process will complete a survey that will be delivered electronically via email. The survey will ask a series of questions that will relate back to two of the evaluation questions stated above. Questions number six-seventeen of the survey (see Appendix C) ask questions that will aid in answering evaluation questions one and two. *What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree? What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects?* These questions directly pertain to the North Carolina Leadership Standards and ask the participant to self-reflect and rate themselves on their own mastery of the standard. In this way, the benefits and specific skills obtained are discovered. The purpose of conducting a survey as well as an interview is to derive any information that participants may feel more comfortable sharing in a more private setting. Participants will complete the necessary paperwork that is required to participate in such a study. Many of the questions will be aligned with North Carolina Leadership standards. It is important the questions align to the standards because this is the way educational leaders are evaluated in North Carolina.

The survey was validated as each of the questions besides basic demographics came directly from the North Carolina Leadership standards. The survey will be delivered in the Google Forms format. Questions one through four of the survey are demographical questions for the participant to complete. Question number five is a direct question asking the participant if they saw value to the SLP approach. This question is a yes/no question. Questions six through seventeen are focused entirely on the North Carolina Leadership Standards. The participant has to indicate if they have little practice, some practice, good practice, or strong practice when reflecting upon each of the standards (see Appendix C). The survey is expected to take ten-fifteen minutes to complete.

Data Source Two

All twelve participants will be asked questions through the interview process. Participants will complete the necessary paperwork that is required to participate in such a study. Interviews will be conducted one on one. The interviews will either be in person or on the telephone. Participants will be asked to rate themselves on a Likert scale from one to five. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, how would you answer the following question? The questions that are asked will be aligned with evaluation question number one, *“What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree?”* as well as evaluation question number two, *“What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects?”* and also evaluation question number three, *“What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program?”* Interview questions number one through nine directly relate to evaluation question number one (see

Appendix C). Interview question number ten directly corresponds to evaluation question number three (see Appendix C).

Data Source Three

Data will also be collected from the NCTWCS. The NCTWCS will be used from the schools the participants were employed. The NCTWCS is deployed every two years. The state of North Carolina expects every teacher to respond to the survey. This is a part of public data collected from all public schools in North Carolina. There will be particular questions from the survey that will be analyzed to further deepen the study and make it as comprehensive as possible. The questions in particular pertaining to effective leadership will be documented and analyzed. There are twenty questions in total that will be reviewed from the NCTWCS (see Appendix D). The questions ask the teachers to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about leadership in their respective schools. The twenty questions answered by the teachers will aid in answering evaluation question number one, “*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree?*” and evaluation question number two, “*What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects?*”? The data presented in the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey will come directly from the teachers in regards to their administrators. In certain situations, this presents a fair and accurate image of what leadership actually looks like in the building. However, in other cases it may not present an honest portrayal of the administrator. For example, if an administrator has had to coach a teacher, and the teacher has been less than cooperative, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey is the perfect opportunity for the teacher to express their frustrations with the administrator in an anonymous way. It is important to remember this when analyzing data about an administrator in the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey.

Data Source Four

Data will be collected from the North Carolina School Report Cards from the schools in which the participants were employed. The NC School Report Card is published each year and is a public data source that provides information on a number of different areas. The data that will be collected and analyzed for this study from the NC School Report Cards for the purpose of this program evaluation will include proficiency ratings and growth measures. Proficiency ratings are the percentage of students that are considered proficient in the specific areas the state mandates testing. Growth measures are calculated by the state after all of the students have been tested and compares the data. The state formulates the measures and determines if a school has either not met growth, met growth, or exceeded growth for the school year. These two standards on the school's report card will be the most important in determining effective leadership. The data will be organized into tables divided by elementary, middle, and high school experience. The data will be grouped in this way to keep the participants together by field. The data presented by the NC School Report Card will be reliable and valid. The data gathered from this source will aid in answering evaluation question number one, *“What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree?”*

Data Analysis

Data will be collected and presented in different formats. The quantitative piece of the study will be organized into tables, charts, and graphs. The quantitative information that is derived from the survey, interview questions, NC Report Cards and NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey will be cataloged in this way. The qualitative information that is collected will be organized by relevancy as it relates to the particular research question. Each of these data sources will be triangulated to answer the three evaluation questions that guide the study.

Evaluation Question One

In order to answer evaluation question number one, data will be utilized from each of the four data sources. The first data source includes a survey. Questions number six through seventeen will aid in answering evaluation question number one (see Appendix C). The second data source is the interview. Interview questions number one through nine will aid in answering evaluation question number one (see Appendix B). The third data source that will be utilized in answering this evaluation question is the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey. Questions one through twenty will aid in answering the evaluation question (see Appendix D). The fourth data source that will be used to answer evaluation question number one is the North Carolina School Report Card. Determining the progress of a school is a direct correlation to the benefits of completing the SLP process. In Figure 1, the first evaluation question is presented surrounded by the data sources that will be utilized to answer the question.

Evaluation Question Two

In answering evaluation question number two, data from the survey, interviews, and the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey will be analyzed. Questions number six through seventeen will be used to gather information for evaluation question number two (see Appendix C). Questions number one through twenty from the NCTWCS will be used to accumulate data for evaluation question number two (see Appendix D). In Figure 2, the second evaluation question is presented surrounded by the data sources that will be utilized to answer the question.

Evaluation Question Three

Data collected from the interview process, question number ten, will be documented to answer evaluation question number three (see Appendix B). The question is asking for

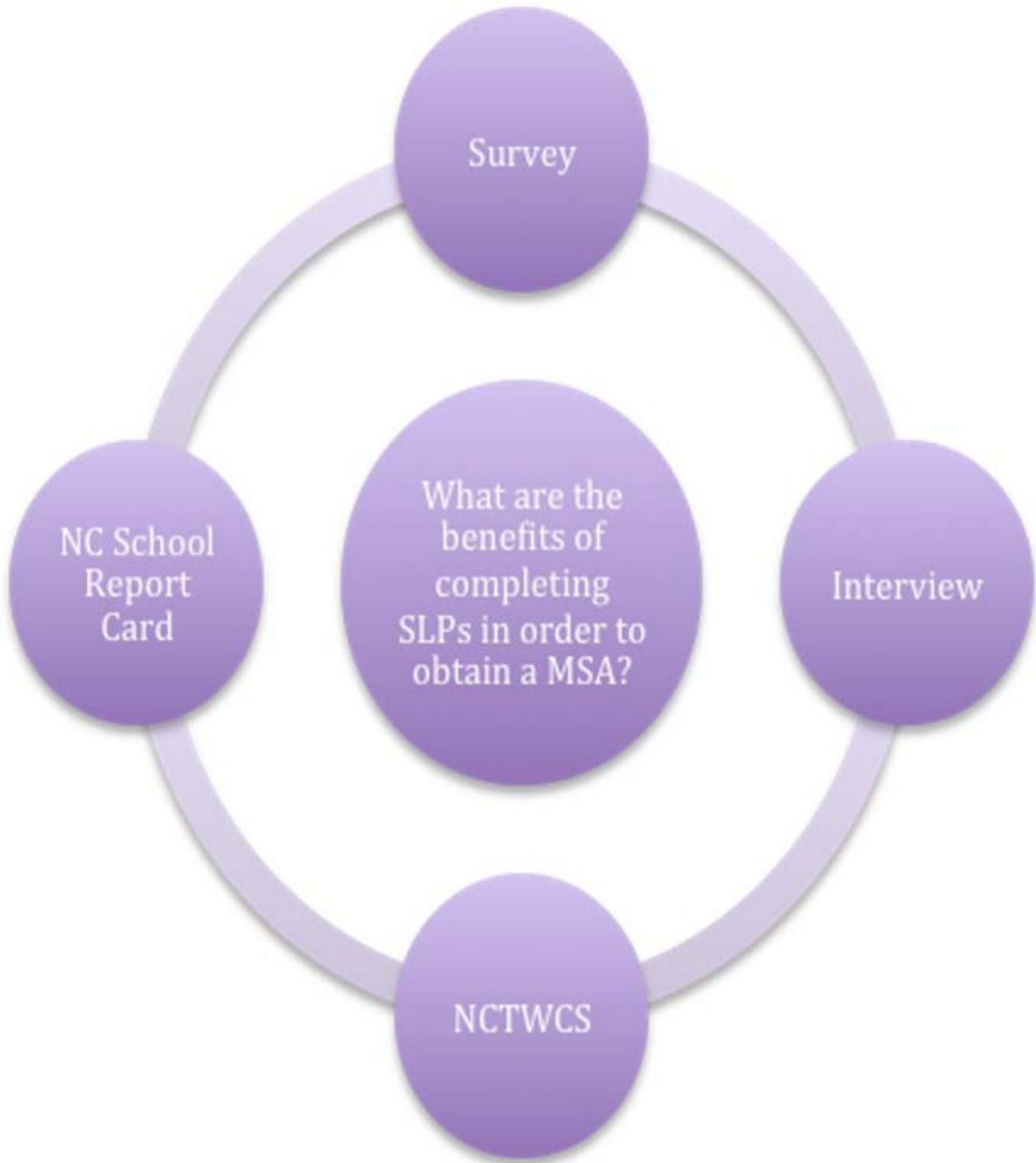


Figure 1. Evaluation question #1 and data sources.



Figure 2. Evaluation question #2 and data sources.

suggestions from the past participants that have now had the opportunity to experience being a school leader and if there is anything that could be added to the program that would be beneficial to future participants. The answers from each of the participants will be utilized to answer this question. In Figure 3, the second evaluation question is presented surrounded by the data sources that will be utilized to answer the question.

The data will be triangulated from each of the four data sources to answer each of the three research questions as well as the overarching question of whether or not students are fully prepared to lead a school after completing the program. From the survey and the interview questions, participants will give their opinions and various viewpoints regarding the training they received in the program and whether or not they felt the program prepared them to lead a school. The interview questions will provide participants the opportunity to discuss any recommendations they may have to better the program in the future. From the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the North Carolina School Report Card, data will be gathered to determine if the participants were prepared to lead a school from the teacher's point of view and also the standards in which schools are measured in the state of North Carolina.

Ethical Considerations

When collecting data for this study, it is important to recognize the researcher is depending on the honesty of the participants for the qualitative and quantitative piece of the evaluation. The interviews and the surveys are completely done by volunteer participants that fulfill the requirements of the study. The answers that are given by the participants are going to be considered truthful and valid by the researcher. The data derived by the North Carolina School Report Card will be considered valid and reliable as it is a report that is issued directly by the state that measures specific growth and performance indicators of a school. The data is



Figure 3. Evaluation question #3 and data source.

considered valid as it is collected and formatted by the state and put together for the use of the public. The data collected from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey will also be considered true by the researcher, as these are the opinions of the teachers that worked in the participant's schools. As noted previously, it is understood the surveys may have bias depending on the circumstances of the teacher at the school. The survey could possibly be utilized as a tool to express frustration with an administrator if the teacher is not currently satisfied with their present state of affairs. If the administrator had to put the teacher on an action plan of any kind, and the teacher was not receptive, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey is a place where the teacher can vent their frustrations in an anonymous capacity to circumvent any additional friction between the teacher and administrator.

Summary

The program evaluation will consist of mixed methods framework and will be used to conduct the study with the qualitative piece given priority. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected during the survey portion of the study as well as the interview portion of the study. Quantitative data will be collected through the NCTWCS and the NC School Report Card. In the next chapter, the data that was collected through survey, interview, the NCTWCS, and the NC School Report Card will be presented and analyzed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Preparing future principals for the challenging roles they will face has changed over the past decades. Universities have worked to improve the programs that prepare them to lead schools. At the time of this study, ECU used Service Leadership Projects as a tool to provide professional development for prospective MSA degree candidates. This model provides students with real experiences designed to mold the student into an educational leader. The program evaluation focuses on a participant-oriented approach. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (1997), a participant-oriented approach was “One that stressed firsthand experience with program activities and settings” (p. 154). This evaluation will focus primarily on the firsthand experience of past graduates of the MSA program at ECU. The purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate the effectiveness of a preparation program for future school leaders that utilizes a Service Learning framework. The study findings should also help with program improvements.

There are three evaluation questions that were the primary focus for the study. The study was a program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of Service Leadership Projects in training future school leaders. The first question was what are the benefits of having to complete a Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree? The second question was what are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects? The third question was what are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could improve the program? Several sources of data will be analyzed to triangulate and utilized to respond to the evaluation questions.

This chapter outlines the data collection and analysis of the program evaluation. It will also include the demographical information of the sample used to conduct the program

evaluation. Results will be provided and organized by evaluation questions, followed by the summary.

ECU offers a MSA degree for perspective students that have an entry level school license and a minimum of three years teaching experience. There are two ways a student can complete the MSA program. The first way is for a student to attend full time. Full time students begin in the fall and continue for three consecutive semesters. The second way a student may complete the degree is by attending part time. Part time students begin in the second term of summer school and continue for six continuous semesters. Both full and part time students must complete 42 student hours. Students must complete 27 coursework hours and 15 internship hours to be awarded the MSA degree (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

ECU centers their MSA degree around Service Leadership Projects. Service Learning is learning through providing a service to someone else. In this case, the student is learning by providing a service to a specific school. Professors have devised the six specific Service Leadership Projects to provide a well rounded experience for the student. The student will complete six Service Leadership Projects throughout the course of the program. Service Learning is the center of the program and dictates a majority of the students' learning over the course of approximately two years. The school district the student is a part of must agree to support the student throughout their endeavor of achieving the MSA degree. The student will not be successful in completing the requirements unless they have the full support of the district. The university requires documented agreements between the student, the superintendent, and the students' mentor, which will be a principal in the district. These documented agreements ensure each party is aware of the expectations that are in place in order for the student to successfully

complete the program. If at any time the students' professor does not feel the student is being granted the experience they need in order to thrive in the program, they may intervene on the students' behalf (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

The student will continuously be involved in a Service Leadership Project throughout their time in the program. The six different Service Leadership Projects include: Positive Impact on Student Learning and Development, Teacher Empowerment and Leadership, Community Involvement and Engagement, Organizational Management, School Culture and Safety, and School Improvement. These six projects encompass a wide variety of responsibilities educational leaders must face on a daily basis. The intent behind the projects is to provide a well rounded experience for each student. No two students will have the same experience when it comes to Service Leadership Projects, as school needs vary from district to district (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

Each project consists of five sections the student must complete. The first section is the Data Collection and Data Analysis Section. This section helps the student become more familiar with the school in which they are serving. The student will use resources such as the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, NC School Report Card, newspaper articles, and the Data Manager at the school to aid them in completing the first section. In section two the student must identify areas for improvement. The student will be able to complete this section after the data is analyzed from section one. Section three includes the Professional Language Summary. This section includes the research the student will conduct on the area in which the project focuses. Section four includes the Action Plan. This section includes the actions the student will take in order to make an impact at the school and complete the goal of the project. Section five includes the Project Evaluation and Impact Summary. In this section the student

evaluates the impact the project had on the summary and reflects upon the implementation process. This section includes the actions the student will take in order to make an impact at the school and complete the goal of the project. In this section, the student is allowed the opportunity to discuss the high points as well as the low during this process (East Carolina University Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021).

Data Collection

The timeframe for data collection was April 1, 2019-May 16, 2019 for the survey and interview portions of the process. The data derived from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the North Carolina School Report Card is accessible online and was accessed from April 1, 2019-June 15, 2019. The data was collected through surveys, an interview, and public information gathered from the NC School Report Card and the NCTWCS from the schools where the participants worked. There were fourteen participants in this study (see Table 1). Participants included principals and assistant principals from elementary, middle and high schools, as well as Central Office staff. Participants included eight Principal Fellows and six Non-Principal Fellows in an effort to determine if the experience differed between the two different pathways students could take at ECU. Participants only included students that obtained a job as a principal, assistant principal, or a central office position after graduation. Participants must have also held a job in educational leadership for a minimum of two years to be eligible. Participants only included graduates that were required to complete Service Leadership Projects and the necessary digital portfolio. Participants did not include previous graduates that were subjected to taking exit exams to obtain licensure in school administration because these students were not required to participate in the Service Leadership Projects. Participants must have graduated from 2012-2015. A list of graduates from the timeframe of the

Table 1

Participants Selected for Research

Name	Current Level of Leadership	Years of Experience in Educational Leadership	Principal Fellow/Traditional	SLP Participant
1E	Principal	4	PF	Yes
2E	Principal	4	PF	Yes
3E	Central Office	3	Traditional	Yes
4E	Principal	6	Traditional	Yes
1M	Central Office	5	PF	Yes
2M	Principal	5	PF	Yes
3M	Assistant Principal	3	PF	Yes
4M	Principal	7	Traditional	Yes
1H	Principal	4	Traditional	Yes
2H	Assistant Principal	4	Traditional	Yes
3H	Assistant Principal	4	PF	Yes
4H	Assistant Principal	4	PF	Yes
5H	Principal	6	Traditional	Yes
6H	Principal	6	PF	Yes

study was obtained from the program. Potential participants were contacted by telephone or via email. It was difficult getting the consent forms signed and returned. This took numerous calls and email reminders. Once the consent forms were returned, the survey was sent to the participants via email. The survey was delivered via Google Forms online and was titled Survey for ECU SLP Participants. The survey was organized in a way that would require minimum work from the participant, but allowed the researcher to get necessary information to complete the evaluation. There were sixteen questions, with fifteen of the questions answered through checkbox. Most participants responded to the survey within the week. It took multiple reminders to get the remainder of the surveys completed. Each of the fourteen participants completed the survey in its entirety. All fourteen surveys were completed within nine days of the survey deployment.

After the survey was concluded, participant interviews began. The complete interview took twice as long as originally estimated. The original time frame was approximately two weeks. The actual process took from April 15-May 16, 2019. It proved to be much more difficult getting in touch with extremely busy leaders, as this time of year can be particularly challenging. During this time of year, participants are preparing for upcoming state tests and ensuring their students are ready for these tests. After participants completed the survey, the interviews were scheduled.

Only ten of the fourteen (71.4%) of the participants completed the interview portion of the study. Four of the participants did not respond. Participants elected to participate over the telephone or via google document. The participants were asked ten questions. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to one hour. Some of the participants gave very detailed answers, while others gave more clipped responses. The participants that were eager to share

their experiences took longer to interview. The interviews were conducted in a four-week time span.

For each of the participants, data about the schools they led were collected from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey as well as the North Carolina School Report Card. Data from the 2016-2017 school year and the 2017-2018 school year were collected from the North Carolina School Report Card that is located on a public website. For a participant to be eligible for the study, they had to have at least two years in a leadership position. The program evaluator obtained the needed information from the various participants regarding their workplaces. Information regarding school achievement from each school in North Carolina is available on this public website. The website was utilized as a tool to locate the school achievement and school growth information. Each participant's school was located and the data recorded for each school for the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 school years. The information was put together by hand and entered and organized into tables. Data was also collected from the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. This data was collected in much the same way as the data collected from the North Carolina School Report Card. The participant's schools were located and each question that pertained to school leadership was documented by hand. There were twenty questions in the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey that pertained to school leadership. This data was coded by hand and entered into tables for analysis.

Data Analysis

The program evaluation was conducted by gathering data from four different sources. The first source of data was a Google Forms survey delivered electronically via email. The survey contained questions that were pertinent to the evaluation questions that guided the study.

These questions were aimed to target the specific skills participants acquired through the SLP process. Survey questions six through seventeen aided in answering both evaluation question number one, “*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree*”? and number two, “*What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects*”?

The second data source were interview questions and they were aligned to answer the evaluation question that pertained more to the SLP process. Interview questions one through nine focused primarily on evaluation question number one, “*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree*”? Interview question number ten focused entirely on evaluation question number three, “*What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program*”?

The quantitative data that was needed to answer the evaluation questions was gathered from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey as well as the North Carolina School Report Card. Data from the NCTWCS and the NC School Report Card contributed in answering evaluation question number one, “*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree*”? and evaluation question number two, “*What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects*”? In Creswell and Miller (2000), “Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). Data will be triangulated from the survey, interview, NCTWCS, and NC School Report Cards in order to answer each of the evaluation questions.

The survey was delivered to participants electronically through Google Forms. In formulating the questions for the survey, the Likert model was utilized for each questions besides the first four questions where basic demographical information was collected. The participants had to choose from the following answers: little practice, some practice, good practice, and strong practice. The questions were derived from the North Carolina Leadership standards. It is imperative the questions align to the standards because this is the way educational leaders are evaluated in North Carolina. The means of data were utilized in the data analysis.

Each of the twenty questions that pertained to school leadership was taken from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and utilized in the program evaluation. The NCTWCS survey data indicated teacher ratings of their administrators' performance on each of the questions selected pertaining to school leadership. This information gave an account of how the teachers that worked under the administrators graded them on their efforts in school administration. The survey was given every two years by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, therefore only data from the 2018 survey was collected to fit the participants' employment record at their school or institution. The data from the North Carolina School Report Card was gathered in much the same fashion as the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. The Performance Letter Grade, Performance Score, Growth Achieved, and Growth Score were pulled from the North Carolina School Report Card. These report cards are issued every year, and data was gathered from the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 school years. After documenting the data, the information was formatted into tables. After organizing the documentation, the participants were coded and the data was analyzed. The data from the North Carolina School Report Card was compared by school year. The interview questions and answers

were reviewed and each of the participants' answers were marked according to which research question they applied to for the study.

Demographics

The participants (see Table 1) that were involved in the research included four assistant principals, eight principals, and two central office employees. There are two ways a student can complete the MSA program. The first way is for a student to attend full time. Full time students begin in the fall and continue for three consecutive semesters. These students are North Carolina Principal Fellows. The second way a student may complete the degree is by attending part time. Part time students begin in the second term of summer school and continue for six continuous semesters. Both full and part time students must complete 42 student hours. Students must complete 27 coursework hours and 15 internship hours to be awarded the MSA degree (ECU Service Leadership Project Handbook, 2019-2021). Each participant completed Service Leadership Projects at ECU and graduated between the years of 2012 and 2015. These very specific requirements for participants narrowed the application pool. Participants represented four different school districts. Three of the districts are considered rural and one of the districts is considered urban. Participants were required to have two years of experience in educational leadership after completing graduation from the program at ECU. Table 1 outlines the participants selected for research.

The purpose of this program evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness by which ECU prepares future educational leaders through Service Leadership Projects. The four sources of data (survey, interview, and NC School Report Card, and NCTWCS) helped answer all three program evaluation questions. The results are presented to answer three program evaluation questions and to determine information that will help improve the principal preparation program. The data

gathered from each of the data sources aided in answering evaluation question number one, “*What are the benefits of completing SLPs in order to obtain a MSA degree*”? The data gathered from the survey and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey promoted answering evaluation question number two, “*What are the specific skills the aspiring leaders acquired from completing these projects*”? The data collected during the interview process provided the answer to research question number three, “*What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program?*”

Qualitative Data Analysis-Part One (Survey)

All fourteen participants participated in the survey that was delivered electronically via google forms. Participants were asked a total of twelve questions pertaining to North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standards that are included in Appendix C. It is important the questions align to the standards because this is the way educational leaders are evaluated in North Carolina. This comes from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The data collected from the survey is organized into Table 2. The numbers in the table indicate how many participants answered in strong, good, some, or little practice.

The data included in Table 2 was coded by first organizing the participants into three different categories for elementary school, middle school, and high school. Column one indicates participants school level: E, elementary; M, middle school; H, high school. Next, the surveys were processed by scripting the responses to each question the participant was asked regarding a leadership standard. There were four possible answers: strong practice, good practice, some practice, and little practice with the first two responses indicating a firm grasp on the leadership standard. Six participants in the study (two high school, two middle school, and two elementary

Table 2

Participants' Self-Perception of Level of Practice by Instructional Leadership Standard

Name	Strong Practice	Good Practice	Some Practice	Little Practice
1E	1	9	2	
2E	1	5	6	
3E	9	3		
4E	12			
1M		7	5	
2M	5	7		
3M	6	5	1	
4M	6	6		
1H	4	7	1	
2H	1	9	2	
3H	2	7	3	
4H	6	5	1	
5H	4	8		
6H	4	8		

school) indicated by 100% they had strong or good practice with the standards. Three participants of the study (one middle school and two high school) indicated by 92% they had strong or good practice with all twelve of the standards covered. Two participants of the study (one elementary school and one high school) indicated by 83% they had strong or good practice with the executive standards. One participant (high school) indicated by 75% they had strong or good practice with the standards. One participant (middle school) indicated by 58% they had strong or good practiced with the standards. One participant (elementary school) indicated by 50% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. All district level employees had to have experience in elementary, middle, or high school and were grouped according to which grade span they were employed.

The quantitative data in Figures 4-16 was gathered from the Google Forms survey that was administered to the participants. This data includes responses from all of the fourteen participants. Two of the participants were unavailable to complete the interview process, but did choose to complete the Google Forms survey. The data in Figure 4 represents an overall opinion of the fourteen original participants as to whether or not the SLP approach had any value to their leadership preparation. The response was 100% affirmative that the participants did see value in the SLP approach.

The data in Figure 5 represents how participants rated themselves on practicing effective leadership *when focusing on my own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals*. Twenty-eight and six tenths percent of participants expressed they had strong practice in this standard; 64.3% expressed they had good practice in the standard; 7.1% expressed they had some practice in the standard.

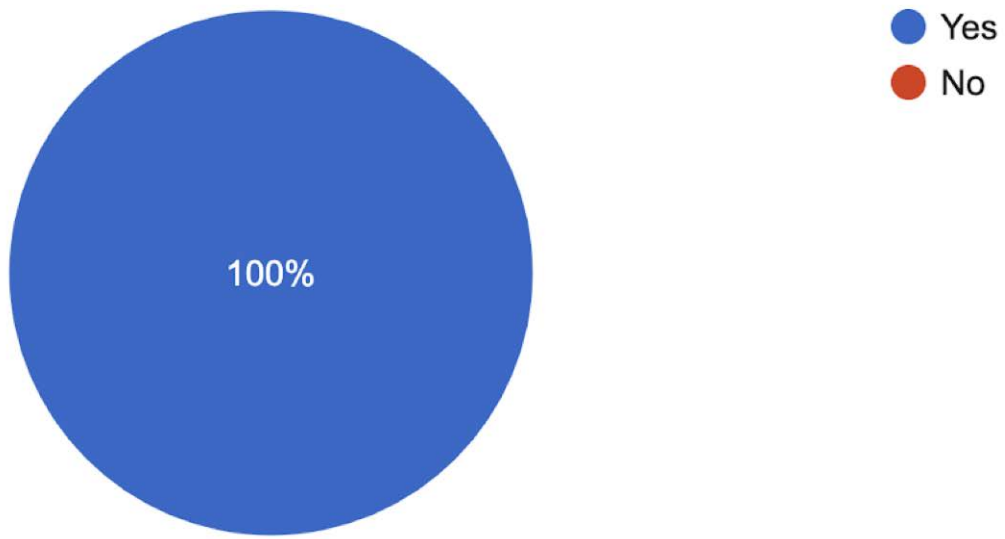


Figure 4. Overall opinion of SLP value.

I practice effective leadership when I focus on my own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals.

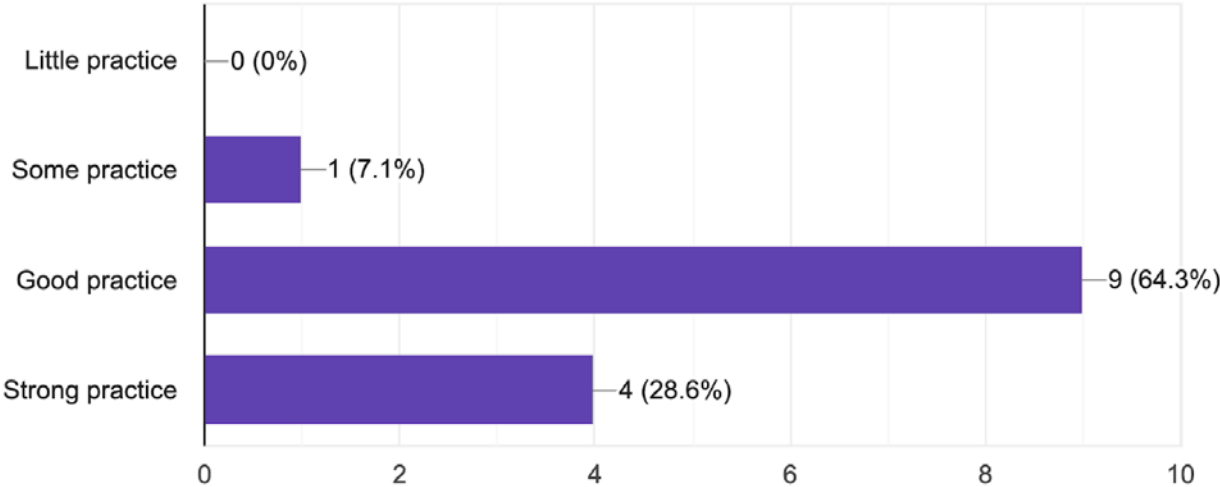


Figure 5. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #1.

I practice effective leadership when I create an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment.

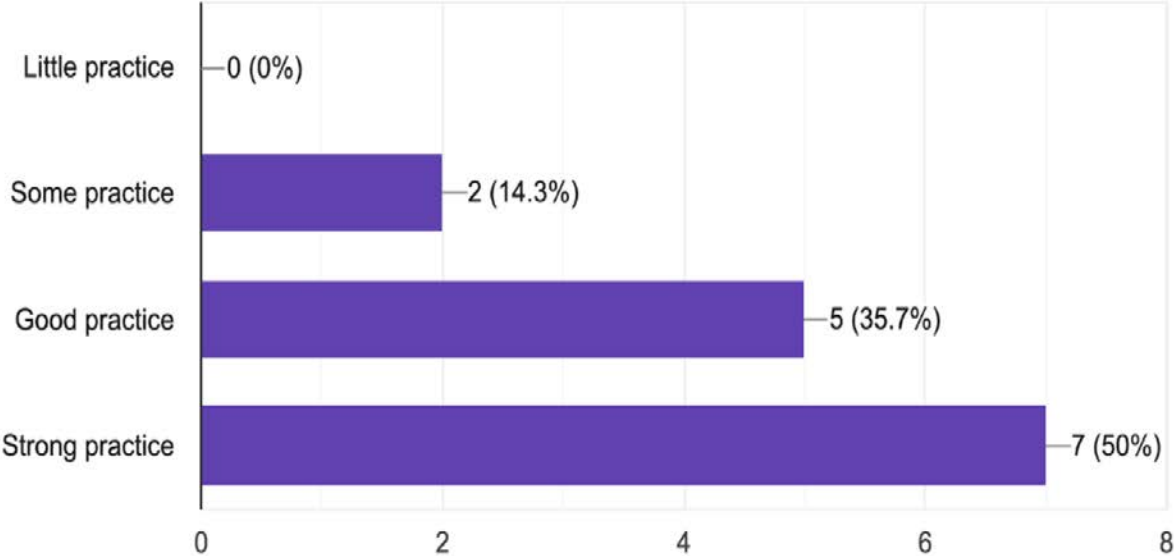


Figure 6. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #2.

I practice effective leadership when I demonstrate knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or hold frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics.

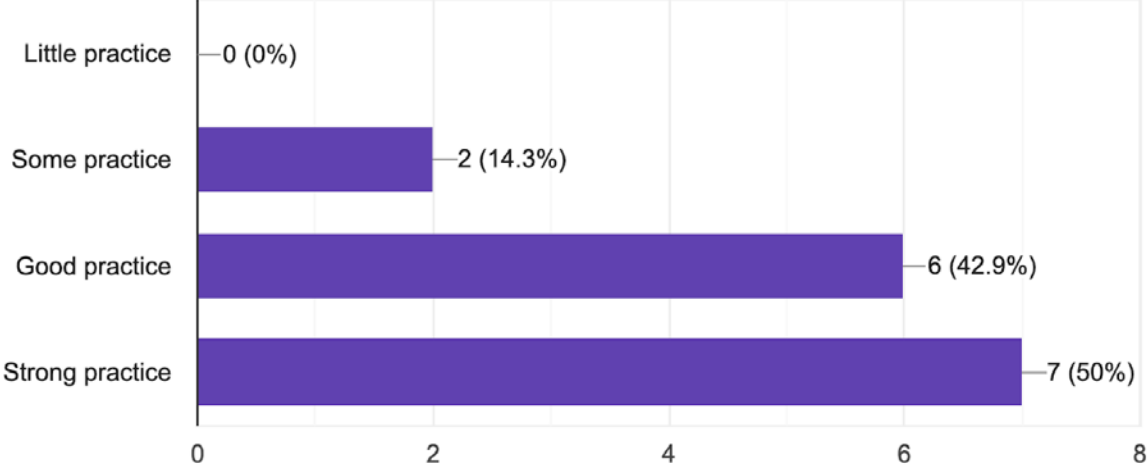


Figure 7. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #3.

I practice effective leadership when I ensure that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state’s accountability program.

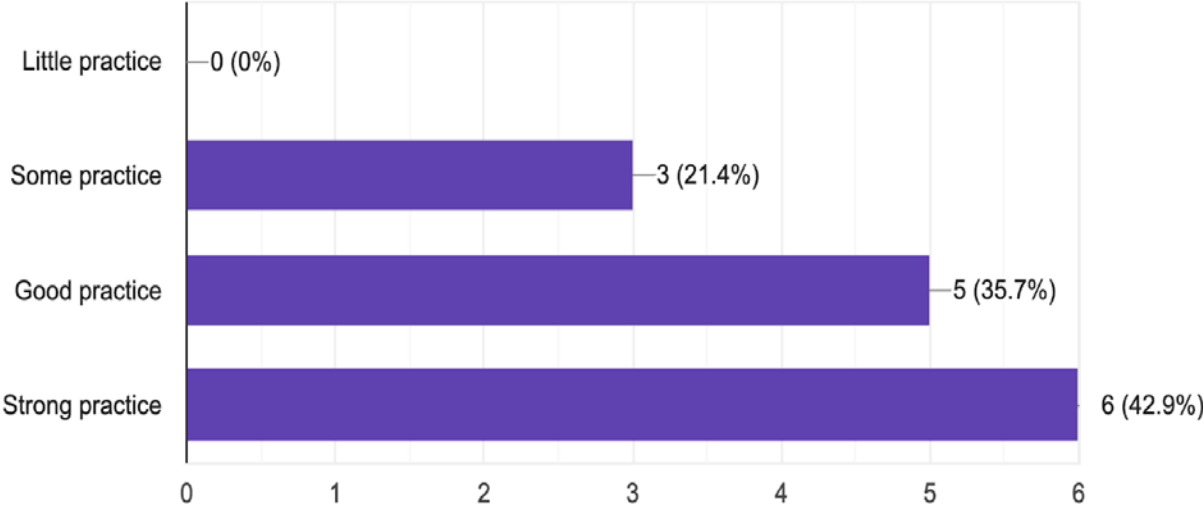


Figure 8. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #4.

I create processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge.

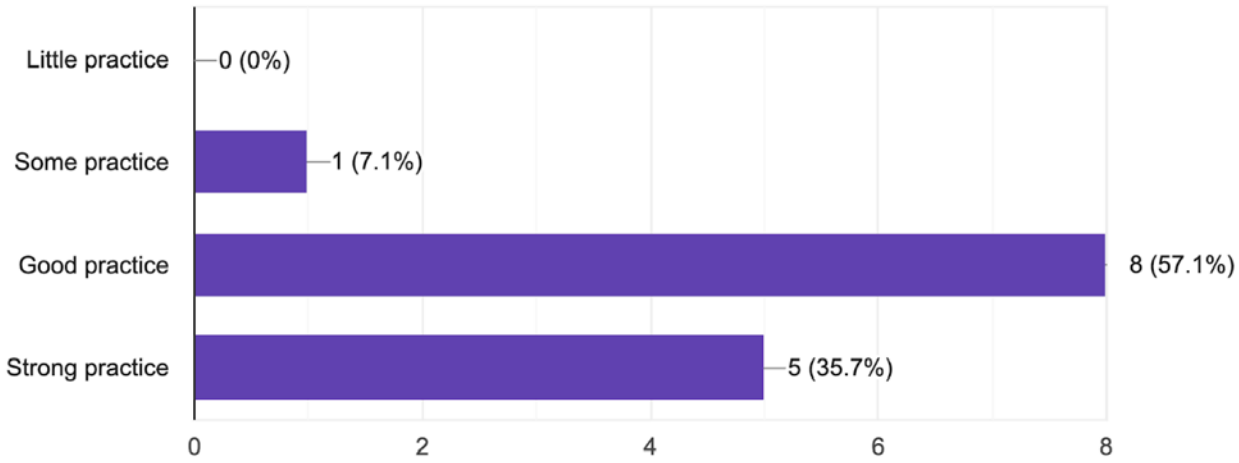


Figure 9. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #5.

I practice effective leadership when I challenge staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills, and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students.

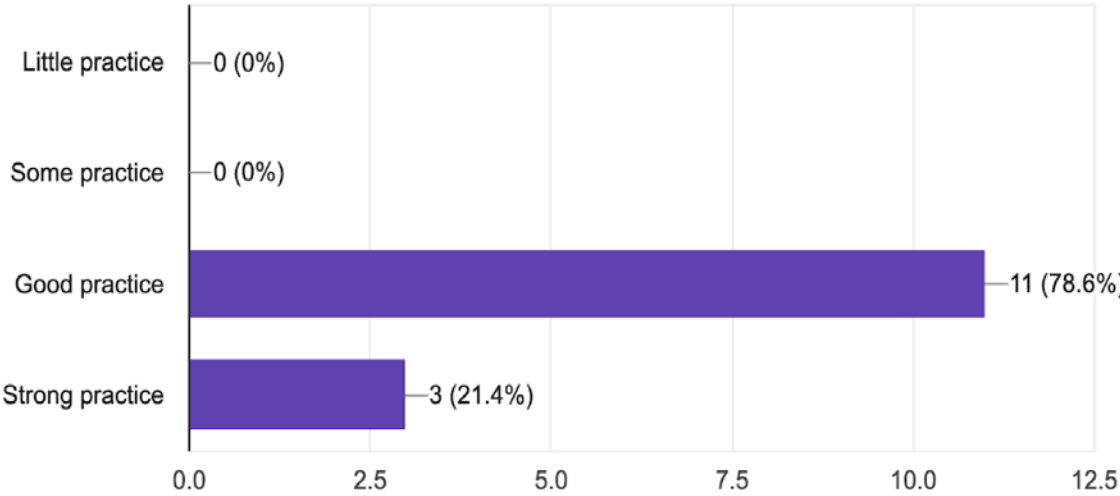


Figure 10. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #6.

I practice effective leadership when I create processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction.

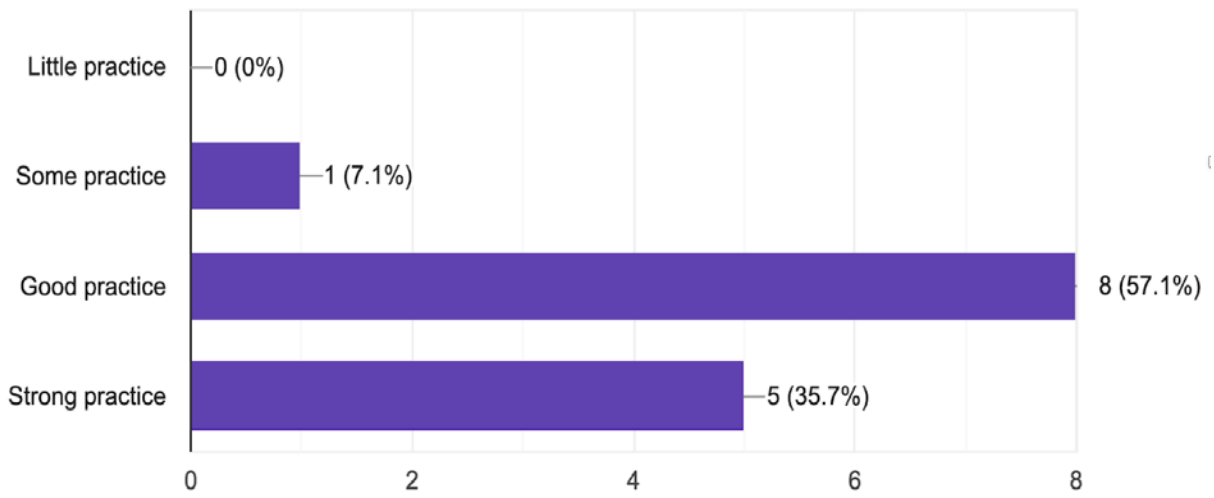


Figure 11. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #7.

I practice effective leadership when I create processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs.

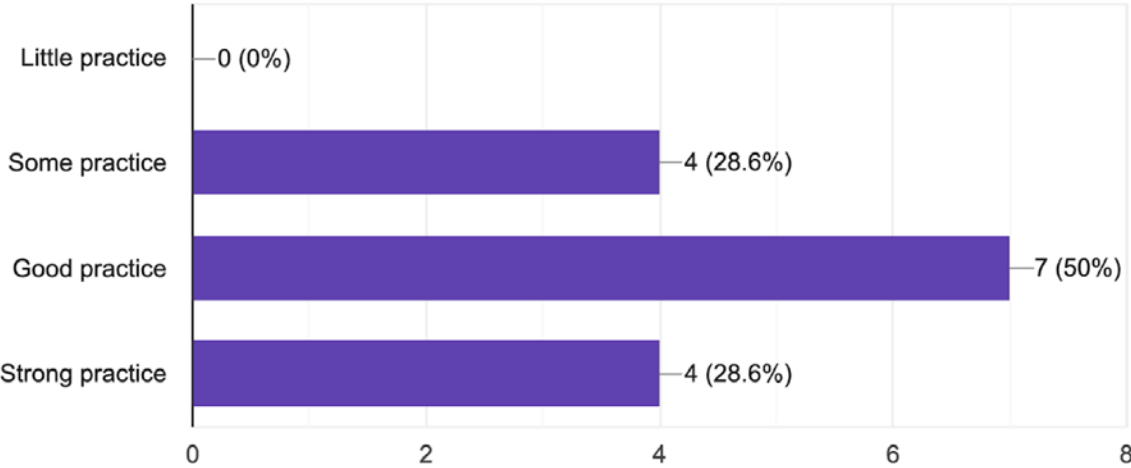


Figure 12. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #8.

I practice effective leadership when I create processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs.

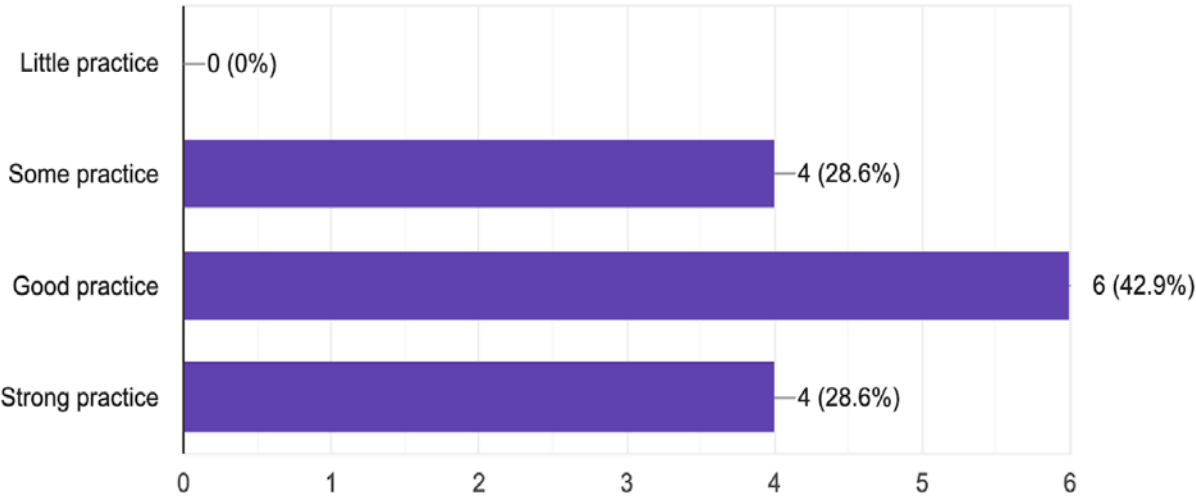


Figure 13. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #9.

I practice effective leadership when I create processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction.

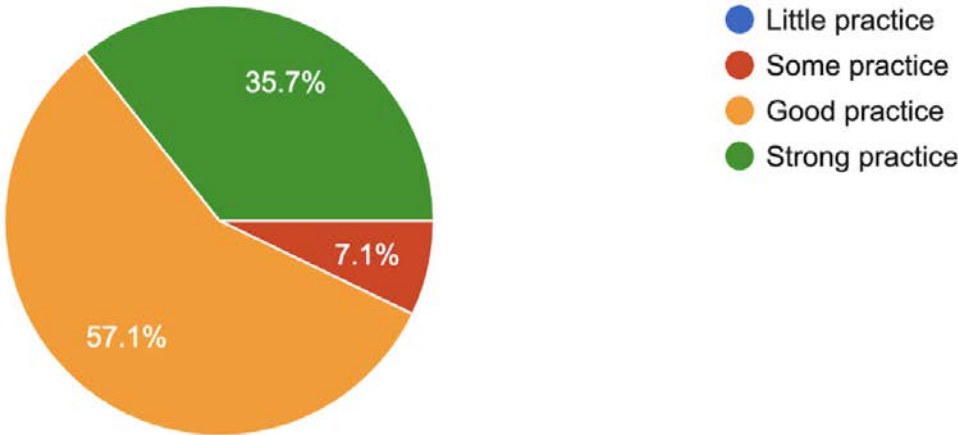


Figure 14. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #10.

I practice effective leadership when I create processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time.

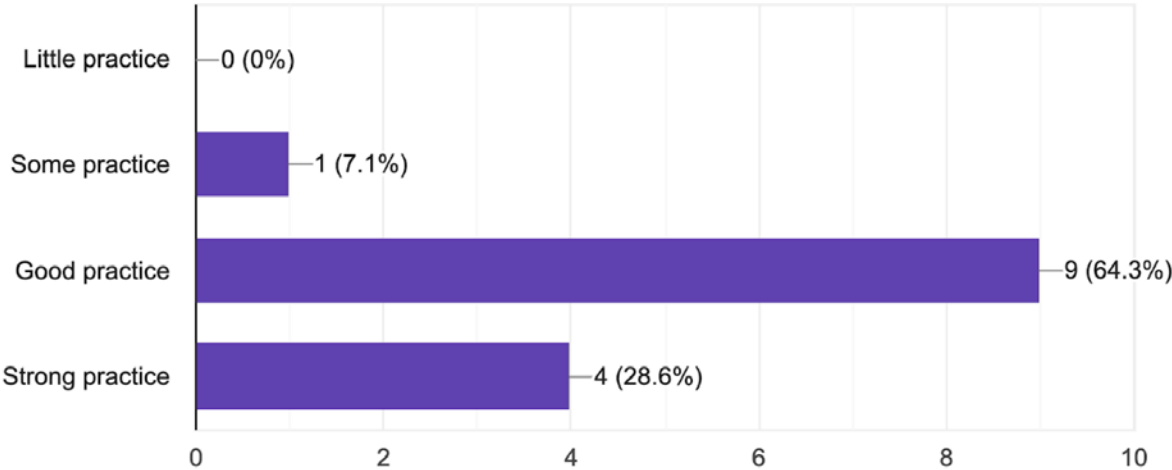


Figure 15. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #11.

I practice effective leadership when I systematically and frequently observe in classrooms and engage in conversations with students about their learning.

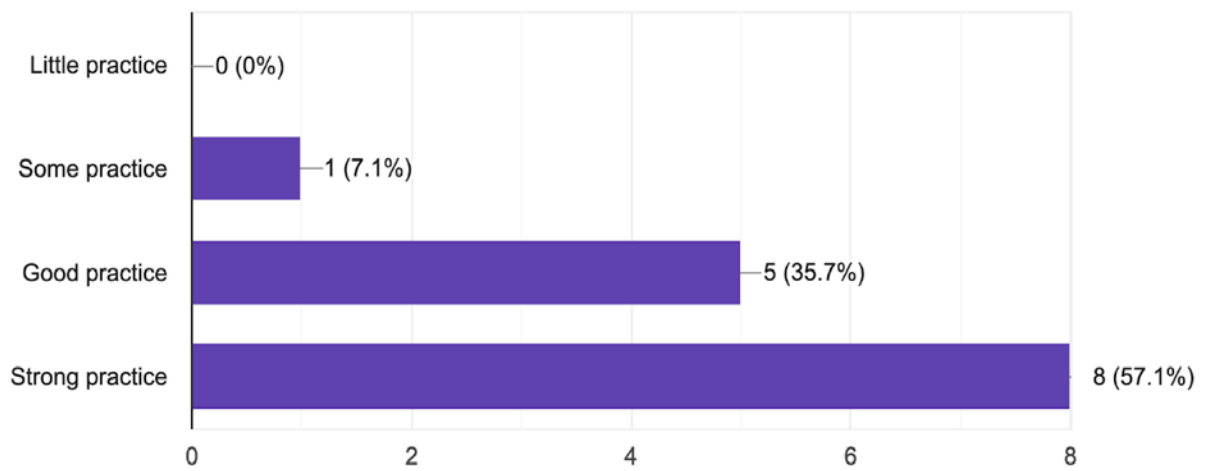


Figure 16. North Carolina School Executive Instructional Leadership Standard question #12.

In Figure 6, participants were asked if they created an environment of distributive leadership and teacher empowerment. Fifty percent of participants expressed they had strong practice in this standard; 35.7% of participants relayed they had good practice in this standard; 14.3% of participants responded they had some practice in this standard.

In Figure 7, participants were asked if they demonstrated knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or hold frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff, and parents around these topics. Fifty percent of participants expressed they had strong practice in this standard; 42.9% of participants had good practice; 13.3% had some practice in this leadership standard.

In Figure 8 participants were asked if they create processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge. Forty-two and nine tenths percent of participants agreed they had strong practice in this skill; 35.7% acknowledged having good practice; 21.4% agreed they had some practice in this skill.

In Figure 9, participants were asked if they ensure there is a logical and appropriate alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program. Thirty-five and seven tenths percent of participants agreed they had strong practice in this standard; 57.1% agreed they had good practice in this standard; 7.1% of participants realized they only had some practice in this standard.

In Figure 10, participants were asked if they challenge staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills, and concepts are essential to the complete educational

development of students. Twenty-one and four tenths percent of participants acknowledged they had strong practice in this standard; 78.6% determined they had good practice.

In Figure 11, participants were asked if they create processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction. Thirty-five and seven tenths percent of participants agree they have strong practice with this standard; 57.1% agree they have good practice; 7.1% of participants acknowledge they have some practice with this standard.

In Figure 12, participants were asked if they create processes for identifying, benchmarking, and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools and best practices for meeting diverse student needs. Twenty-eight and six tenths percent of participants agreed they had strong practice with this standard; 50% agreed they had good practice; 28.6% realized they had some practice with this standard.

In Figure 13, participants were asked if they created processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs. Twenty-eight and six tenths percent of participants agreed they had strong practice with this skill; 42.9% agreed they had good practice; 28.6% said they had some practice with this skill.

In Figure 14, participants were asked if they create processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction. Thirty-five and seven tenths percent said they had strong practice in this standard; 57.1% said they had good practice in this standard; 7.1% of participants said they had some practice in this standard.

In Figure 15, participants were asked if they create processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time. Twenty-eight and six

tenths percent of participants acknowledged they had strong practice in this standard; 64.3% said they had good practice; 7.1% realized they only had some practice in this standard.

In Figure 16, participants were asked if they systematically and frequently observe in classrooms and engage in conversations with students about learning. Fifty-seven and one tenths percent agreed they have strong practice in this standard, while 35.7% said they have good practice. 7.1% realized they had some practice in this standard.

Summary of Quantitative Data Analysis

The participants were asked twelve questions pertaining to North Carolina School Executive Instructional Standards in the survey. The answers to these questions could be strong practice, good practice, some practice or little practice. Six participants in the study indicated by 100% they had strong or good practice in all twelve leadership standards. Three participants in the study indicated by 92% they had strong or good practice in the twelve leadership standards. Two participants in the study indicated by 83% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated by 75% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated they had by 58% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated by 50% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. After completing the survey, it is possible to partly answer program evaluation questions number one, *“What are the benefits of having to complete a Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree”*? It is also possible to partly answer program evaluation question number two, *“What are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects”*? The trends that were identified indicate the majority of the sample population rated themselves as having strong or good practice in the leadership standards.

Qualitative Data Analysis-Part Two (Interview)

Participants were asked ten questions with options to expand their answers. A series of questions were developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program as well as an opportunity for the participant to communicate freely and candidly regarding areas in which they feel the program could use improvement. The interview questions were geared more toward the processes and procedures of the SLP. Questions are included in Appendix B. The process was explained to participants and they were invited to take part in the research. Participants were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix A). Only ten of the fourteen total participants completed the qualitative phase of research which is noted in the Table 3.

Program Evaluation Question #1

What are the benefits of having to complete a Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree?

In survey question number five (see Appendix C), 100% of participants agreed the SLP process had value to their leadership preparation. The process gave participants practical experience and the ability to work directly with the needs of their respective schools. It also proved instrumental in helping participants hone their data analyzing skills in searching for methods to solve school problems.

Participants appreciated the fact the SLPs were aligned with principal competencies and included real world practice. One participant noted, “They were working toward training to be a school leader, not working toward a degree.”

To respond to this question, participants were asked if completing Service Leadership Projects made them a better leader. Participants were asked to rate their experience on a scale of one to five with one being the lowest and five being the highest. After answering the rating

Table 3

Participants that Completed the Interview

Name	Current Level of Leadership	Years of Experience in Educational Leadership	Principal Fellow/Traditional	SLP Participant
1E	Principal	4	PF	Yes
2E	Principal	4	PF	Yes
3E	Central Office	3	Traditional	Yes
4E	Principal	6	Traditional	Yes
1M	Central Office	5	PF	Yes
2M	Principal	5	PF	Yes
3M	Assistant Principal	3	PF	Yes
4M	Principal	7	Traditional	Yes
1H	Principal	4	Traditional	Yes
2H	Assistant Principal	4	Traditional	Yes
3H	Assistant Principal	4	PF	Yes
4H	Assistant Principal	4	PF	Yes

section of the questions, participants were asked why or why not? It was throughout this section, participants expounded upon the benefits they experienced while completing the various SLPs. Out of the ten participants, 50% gave the highest rating of a five, 30% rated the process at a four, 10% rated the process at a three, and 10% rated the process with a two when asked this question.

The responses to this question were read several times and the researcher tallied the various responses to determine themes and frequencies of responses within each theme. One theme that emerged was learning to collect and analyze relevant school data. Forty percent of the sample population discussed the importance of learning how to collect pertinent data for your particular school in this section. One participant (3H) explained:

“I feel this process was instrumental in helping hone my data analyzing skills in searching for methods to solve school problems. While the school’s principal may only allow certain latitude in the depth of your SLP, the ability to practice delving into the school’s data was invaluable.”

Another participant (3E) expounded by saying the following:

“The Service Leadership Project process gave me practical experience. I was able to work directly with the needs of my school and collect and utilize data pertinent to my school and students. Additionally, I was able to experience the data collection process and used this process when I became a principal. This information was so valuable in learning a new school, staff group, and students.”

Before being tasked with a SLP project, participants had no experience in data retrieval. The participants indicated they learned through the SLP process the necessary methods in gathering data for a particular school. After the data was gathered and organized, through the SLP process, the participants must also analyze the data as it pertains the needs of their particular

school. Participants indicated this was valuable knowledge in moving forward in their respective careers.

Another recurring theme when asked to expand upon why or why not the Service Leadership Project experience made the participant a better leader was learning data analysis processes and procedures. Fifty percent of the sample population discussed this when asked the why or why not portion of the question. One participant (1E) said:

“The Service Leadership Project process provided me with processes and procedures for research, analysis, and change. I have used similar processes as I have entered new schools and had to learn about the staff, students, culture, and procedures that are in place and work to make them better.”

Another participant (2M) explained:

“The Service Leadership Project is a wonderful reflective process that made me really think through my project and day to day procedures. The Service Leadership Projects that were connected and build on one another were the most beneficial. I think they helped me become a better leader, mainly by helping me learn to be a more reflective leader and learn about failures.”

The participants discussed the actual process of analyzing the data and the procedures that were taught during the SLP process. Being able to locate the data and organize it is one part of the equation, however, learning to decipher what the data is saying is another skill set. The participants discussed how useful section two in the SLP process was for them in learning to read the data and what it means to the school’s needs.

Program Evaluation Question #2

What are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects?

Participants discussed the strategies utilized during the Service Leadership Projects that aided them in becoming more effective educational leaders. One of the strategies discussed was the reflective piece that is necessary during the SLP process. It was observed the reflective piece was necessary in order to make the participant ponder on the day to day reality of the project and how it will take shape in the school. Sixty percent of the participants that completed the interview remarked about how effective the data collection process and the data analysis portion of the projects were in preparing for future leadership roles. It was also noted the SLPs aligned specifically with principal competencies and that proved beneficial to participants. One participant (3M) explained:

“I appreciate how the Service Leadership Projects are aligned with principal competencies. You get real world practice, and you are working toward training to be a school leader. You are not working specifically toward a degree.”

Another participant (4M) observed the following:

“I learned how to complete tasks and talk to key leaders in the school. Each Service Leadership Project had a specific skill or task that gave me knowledge towards administration.”

Participant (1M) shared the following:

“The Service Leadership Process sets up to be very data driven. When you gather initial data from school, it allows you the insight of the school and it directs you to what you can focus on and improve upon. It teaches data driven skills that are part of the process.”

One of the specific skills addressed by 40% of the participants in which they were all in agreement regarded the data collection portion of the study. These participants discussed the importance of learning how to collect pertinent data for your particular school. Another skill that was addressed by 50% of the participants involved learning processes and procedures. Specifically, the processes and procedures for research, analysis, and change. Participants also discussed how the Service Learning Projects are aligned with principal competencies and getting real world practice with the standards.

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey given to teachers in 2018 asked twenty different question pertaining to their current administration. The questions were answered as strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or agree. If the teachers were not satisfied with administration in a certain question they would answer disagree or strongly disagree. If the teachers were satisfied with the way their current administration was handling the specific question, they would answer agree or strongly agree. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. This question pertained to teachers being held to high standards for delivering instruction to students.

Program Evaluation Question #3

What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could improve the program?

Participants were asked at the end of the interview process to discuss any suggestions they would offer to improve the program. The participants were also asked if there was anything

they needed during their tenure in the program they did not receive. Frequency and percentage were utilized in determining the prevalent themes. The interview questions utilized to answer the evaluation question were questions nine and ten (see Appendix B). Participants had varying ideas when asked for suggestions to better the program. Only two of the themes were mentioned multiple times. The first was budgeting. The participants that discussed budgeting felt they did not have enough exposure during the SLP process to prepare them for their future leadership roles. The other theme mentioned more than once was real-world simulations. The participants that discussed real-world simulations felt they could have gotten a better experience if the MSA program included more of these situations to better prepare them for future leadership roles. Other suggestions included more access to district staff, more autonomy in choosing speakers, aid in attaining a job, writing staff memos, and expanding relationships with other counties.

Participant (1M) offered the following suggestions to consider:

“I enjoyed the shadowing process of the experience. I did more shadowing on my own during the first year. If there was some way to work that into the program, that would be a good idea. Finding a principal that had been successful in a particular area that I would like to focus on, and finding that institution or other school I could connect with during the program. I think it would be a positive thing for ECU to expand relationships with various counties and schools.”

Participant (4M) had the following suggestion to consider:

“Access to local district staff to ask questions.”

Participant (1E) offered the following suggestions:

“It would have been helpful to have the opportunity for more collaboration with someone in the school. I had a mentor that was the Assistant Principal at my school, but it was often difficult to find time to just sit and discuss the data (that I needed to review) and what it was telling us because the leadership team already had a plan and data that they were using.”

Participant (3M) vocalized the following suggestions:

“I wish that I could have had more access to the financial side, like budgeting. This was one area I felt least prepared. There was a lot of talk about being instructional leaders, but not enough about managerial aspects.”

Participant (3H) offered the following suggestions:

“I believe I received a great level of support and instruction through ECU’s School of Administration Masters’ program. However, I will say that I wish ECU was more involved in the job attainment process. While I received a job offer and am currently still working in administration, some of my classmates did not. While it is not necessarily the school’s obligation to assist in job attainment, I would like to see ECU more involved in that process. I would have liked to have had more autonomy in choosing the speakers who presented during the leadership seminar class as well.”

Participant (2M) had the following to share regarding the program:

“I did not feel as prepared about handling budget and money as I wished I could have. That was a huge learning curve.”

Participant (2E) had the following suggestions:

“The program should incorporate more real life scenarios and how to write memos to staff.”

Participant (3E) observed the following:

“I believe having an end of program simulation would be beneficial at the end of the experience as a way to show growth in practice. Additionally, I believe having an opportunity to run through scenarios would be valuable.”

Following the qualitative phase of the research process is the quantitative phase. This data was gathered from the North Carolina School Report Card, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, and the Google Forms survey that was delivered with the participants’ consent.

Quantitative Data Analysis-Part Three (NC Teaching Working Conditions Survey)

Tables 5-24 outline results recorded from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey that was administered in 2018. Each of the questions taken from the survey are centered around School Leadership. This survey is administered to teachers and they respond to the prompts regarding their working conditions at their current school. The data came directly from the teachers in regards to their administrators. Data is publicly available and for this study was downloaded and analyzed to determine the benefits and specific skills participants gained from the SLP process. The data is only for principals because district level leaders do not have teachers they directly supervise. The teachers’ responses to the specific questions were recorded and documented into the following tables (see Tables 4 through 23).

In Table 4, each participant’s school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working

Table 4

NCTWCS: School Leadership; There is an Atmosphere of Trust and Mutual Respect

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	9%	26%	44%	21%
2E	7%	13%	72%	7%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	15%	48%	36%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	9%	29%	40%	23%
3M	3%	8%	53%	36%
4M	5%	26%	51%	18%
1H	11%	30%	54%	5%
2H	5%	13%	64%	18%
3H	5%	23%	50%	22%
4H	5%	32%	60%	3%

Table 5

NCTWCS: School Leadership; Teachers Feel Comfortable Raising Issues and Concerns that are Important to Them

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	10%	44%	32%	15%
2E	6%	28%	56%	11%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	6%	13%	42%	39%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	9%	29%	40%	23%
3M	2%	10%	52%	37%
4M	6%	19%	57%	19%
1H	7%	17%	63%	13%
2H	6%	15%	57%	23%
3H	4%	15%	54%	27%
4H	5%	28%	65%	3%

Table 6

NCTWCS: School Leadership; School Leadership Consistently Supports Teachers

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	2%	35%	44%	19%
2E	8%	15%	57%	21%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	9%	52%	39%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	3%	19%	44%	33%
3M	2%	3%	56%	39%
4M	7%	25%	45%	23%
1H	4%	22%	64%	11%
2H	1%	9%	62%	28%
3H	0%	18%	56%	26%
4H	3%	15%	66%	16%

Table 7

NCTWCS: School Leadership; Teachers are Held to High Professional Standards for

Delivering Instruction

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	2%	53%	44%
2E	0%	4%	61%	35%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	0%	45%	55%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	0%	54%	46%
3M	2%	2%	45%	52%
4M	4%	4%	54%	39%
1H	4%	9%	64%	23%
2H	1%	9%	62%	28%
3H	3%	13%	64%	20%
4H	0%	3%	65%	32%

Table 8

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Facilitates Using Data to Improve

Student Learning

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	0%	70%	30%
2E	2%	0%	63%	35%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	3%	34%	62%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	0%	31%	69%
3M	2%	3%	45%	50%
4M	4%	5%	56%	35%
1H	4%	0%	73%	24%
2H	1%	6%	68%	25%
3H	2%	7%	67%	24%
4H	2%	5%	62%	32%

Table 9

NCTWCS: School Leadership; Teacher Performance is Assessed Objectively

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	2%	7%	66%	24%
2E	4%	7%	65%	24%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	3%	3%	44%	50%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	9%	52%	39%
3M	0%	5%	50%	45%
4M	4%	15%	55%	27%
1H	2%	7%	76%	15%
2H	1%	6%	68%	25%
3H	4%	6%	67%	23%
4H	7%	10%	62%	22%

Table 10

NCTWCS: School Leadership; Teachers Receive Feedback that Can Help Them Improve

Teaching

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	5%	71%	24%
2E	2%	7%	70%	20%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	6%	36%	58%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	3%	63%	34%
3M	0%	6%	56%	37%
4M	5%	11%	58%	25%
1H	5%	9%	65%	20%
2H	2%	13%	63%	22%
3H	1%	18%	63%	18%
4H	5%	11%	58%	27%

Table 11

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The Faculty and Staff Have a Shared Vision

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	7%	67%	26%
2E	2%	6%	73%	20%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	6%	55%	39%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	21%	62%	18%
3M	0%	8%	47%	45%
4M	4%	16%	58%	22%
1H	9%	13%	69%	9%
2H	0%	16%	65%	19%
3H	2%	12%	63%	22%
4H	2%	7%	76%	16%

Table 12

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The Procedures for Teacher Evaluation are Consistent

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	7%	69%	24%
2E	2%	2%	75%	21%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	3%	3%	48%	45%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	15%	47%	38%
3M	2%	2%	50%	47%
4M	2%	11%	58%	29%
1H	2%	0%	76%	22%
2H	2%	14%	57%	27%
3H	4%	12%	66%	17%
4H	2%	17%	59%	22%

Table 13

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Improvement Team Provides Effective

Leadership at This School

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	5%	71%	24%
2E	2%	4%	78%	16%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	3%	47%	50%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	25%	44%	31%
3M	2%	2%	52%	44%
4M	6%	13%	54%	27%
1H	5%	13%	65%	16%
2H	3%	15%	60%	22%
3H	1%	14%	62%	22%
4H	2%	10%	66%	22%

Table 14

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The Faculty are Recognized for Accomplishments

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	7%	14%	48%	31%
2E	6%	22%	52%	20%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	4%	10%	50%	36%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	3%	9%	49%	40%
3M	2%	3%	52%	44%
4M	2%	11%	57%	30%
1H	4%	7%	59%	30%
2H	3%	15%	56%	25%
3H	1%	6%	59%	34%
4H	2%	5%	73%	21%

Table 15

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Leadership Issues

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	25%	62%	12%
2E	6%	16%	67%	10%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	10%	55%	35%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	6%	18%	67%	9%
3M	3%	5%	59%	33%
4M	4%	12%	58%	27%
1H	4%	25%	58%	13%
2H	4%	18%	61%	17%
3H	2%	16%	58%	23%
4H	2%	13%	68%	17%

Table 16

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Facilities and Resources

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	10%	62%	29%
2E	0%	4%	79%	17%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	6%	64%	30%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	9%	18%	56%	18%
3M	2%	2%	60%	37%
4M	2%	8%	65%	25%
1H	8%	23%	54%	15%
2H	2%	8%	70%	20%
3H	1%	14%	69%	15%
4H	2%	5%	78%	15%

Table 17

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: The Use of Time in My School

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	33%	53%	14%
2E	2%	12%	71%	14%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	6%	67%	30%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	6%	23%	51%	20%
3M	2%	5%	63%	31%
4M	4%	17%	57%	22%
1H	6%	22%	61%	12%
2H	2%	14%	64%	23%
3H	1%	12%	64%	23%
4H	3%	13%	73%	10%

Table 18

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Professional Development

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	12%	69%	19%
2E	4%	8%	80%	8%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	3%	67%	30%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	9%	82%	9%
3M	2%	2%	69%	27%
4M	5%	15%	62%	18%
1H	4%	18%	63%	16%
2H	7%	20%	52%	21%
3H	0%	11%	70%	19%
4H	2%	8%	72%	18%

Table 19

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Teacher Leadership

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	10%	73%	17%
2E	2%	6%	81%	10%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	3%	64%	33%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	9%	71%	21%
3M	2%	3%	63%	32%
4M	4%	15%	53%	29%
1H	4%	16%	64%	16%
2H	1%	14%	68%	17%
3H	1%	6%	69%	24%
4H	2%	5%	71%	22%

Table 20

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Community Support and Involvement

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	0%	5%	81%	14%
2E	0%	2%	83%	15%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	3%	3%	62%	31%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	31%	62%	6%
3M	2%	5%	57%	35%
4M	0%	7%	59%	33%
1H	6%	10%	71%	12%
2H	2%	9%	68%	21%
3H	1%	7%	70%	21%
4H	2%	11%	74%	14%

Table 21

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Managing Student Conduct

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	2%	19%	60%	19%
2E	2%	4%	76%	18%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	3%	9%	52%	36%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	15%	21%	56%	9%
3M	3%	8%	47%	42%
4M	11%	20%	41%	29%
1H	11%	18%	62%	9%
2H	5%	24%	52%	19%
3H	6%	24%	55%	15%
4H	3%	7%	79%	10%

Table 22

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: Instructional Practices and Support

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	2%	14%	65%	19%
2E	2%	14%	69%	16%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	12%	58%	30%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	11%	66%	23%
3M	2%	5%	58%	35%
4M	5%	11%	58%	26%
1H	8%	2%	77%	13%
2H	1%	9%	72%	19%
3H	1%	4%	74%	21%
4H	2%	7%	69%	22%

Table 23

NCTWCS: School Leadership; The School Leadership Makes a Sustained Effort to Address

Teacher Concerns About: New Teacher Support

Name	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1E	8%	21%	55%	16%
2E	0%	19%	68%	13%
3E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4E	0%	3%	58%	39%
1M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2M	0%	15%	70%	15%
3M	2%	5%	64%	30%
4M	2%	5%	58%	35%
1H	8%	9%	66%	17%
2H	3%	9%	65%	22%
3H	3%	3%	64%	31%
4H	4%	7%	63%	26%

Table 24

School Achievement and Growth Data 2016-2017 (Quantitative)

Name	Performance Letter Grade	Performance Score	Growth Achieved	Growth Score
1E	C	67	Not Met	83.3
2E	C	66	Met	82.1
3E	C	67	Met	84.3
4E	C	58	Exceeded	94.8
1M	D	46	Not Met	51.7
2M	D	51	Not Met	61.7
3M	D	52	Met	72.9
4M	D	45	Not Met	65.7
1H	D	46	Not Met	56.9
2H	B	80	Exceeded	95.6
3H	C	64	Not Met	68.2
4H	C	61	Exceeded	86.9

Condition's Survey. In the other ten schools, the lowest percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing is teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them was 47%. The highest percentage of the schools was 89%.

In Table 5, each participant's school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. The question presented determined whether teachers felt comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. The percentages ranged from a low of 12% to a high of 54% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they do not feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. The percentages ranged from a low of 47% to a high of 89% that teachers agree or strongly agree they do feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.

In Table 6, each participant's school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 6, teachers were asked if school leadership consistently supported them. There was a range of 5% to 37% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing school leadership did not support them. The range of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing school leadership did consistently support teachers was 63% to 95%.

In Table 7, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 7 teachers are asked if they are held to a high professional standard for delivering instruction. Teachers that disagreed or strongly disagreed varied in percentage from 0% as a low to 16% as a high. Teachers that agreed or strongly agreed they were held to a high

professional standard for delivering instruction varied in percentage from 84% as a low to 100% as a high.

In Table 8, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 8 teachers were asked if school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning. Teachers that disagreed or strongly disagreed varied in percentage from a low of 0% to a high of 9%. Teachers that agreed or strongly agreed school leadership does facilitate using data to improve student learning ranged in percentage from a low of 91% to a high of 100%.

In Table 9, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 9 teachers were asked if performance was assessed objectively. Teachers that disagreed or strongly disagreed they were assessed objectively varied in range in percentage from a low of 6% to a high of 19%. Teachers that agreed or strongly agreed they were assessed objectively varied in range in percentage from a low of 82% to a high of 95%.

In Table 10, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 10 teachers were asked if they received feedback that could help them improve teaching. Teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed they received feedback that could help them improve instruction varied in range in percentage from a low of 3% to a high of 19%. Teachers agreed or strongly agreed they did receive feedback that could help them improve instruction from a low of 81% to a high of 97%.

In Table 11, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 11 teachers were asked if faculty and staff had a shared vision. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement varied in range from 6% to 22%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that faculty and staff do have a shared vision varied in range with a low of 78% to a high of 94%.

In Table 12, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 12 teachers were asked if procedures for teacher evaluations were consistent. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement varied in range from a low of 2% to a high of 19%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that procedures for teacher evaluations are consistent varied in range from a low of 81% to a high of 98%.

In Table 13, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 13 teachers are asked if the school improvement team provides effective leadership at their respective schools. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the school improvement team does not provide effective leadership varied in percentage from a low of 3% to a high of 25%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that the school improvement team does provide effective leadership varied in range from a low of 75% to a high of 97%.

In Table 14, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 14 teachers are asked if faculty are recognized for accomplishments. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that faculty are not recognized for accomplished varied in

range from a low of 7% to a high of 28%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing faculty are recognized for their accomplishments varied in range from a low of 72% to a high of 96%.

In Table 15, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 15 teachers are asked if the school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about leadership issues. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about leadership issues ranged in percentage from a low of 8% to a high of 29%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about leadership issues varied in percentage from a low of 71% to a high of 90%.

In Table 16, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 16 teachers were asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about facilities and resources. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to this statement range from 4% to 31%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about facilities and resources range in percentage from 74% as a low to 97% as a high.

In Table 17, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 17 teachers are asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about the use of time in their school. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement ranged in percentage from 6% to 33%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns

about the use of time in their school ranged in percentage from a low of 71% to a high of 97%.

In Table 18, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 18 teachers are asked if the school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about professional development. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this question ranged in percentage from a low of 3% to a high of 27%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about professional development ranged in percentage from a low of 73% to a high of 97%.

In Table 19, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 19 teachers were asked if the school leadership made a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to this question ranged in percentage from 3% to 20%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that school leadership made a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about teacher leadership varied in percentage from a low of 80% to a high of 97%.

In Table 20, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 20 teachers were asked if the school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about community support and involvement. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this question ranged in percentage from 2% as a low to 31% as a high. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that school leadership does make a sustained effort to

address teacher concerns about community support and involvement ranged in percentage from 68% as a low to 98% as a high.

In Table 21, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 21 teachers were asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about managing student conduct. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this question ranged in percentage with 6% as a low and 36% as a high. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about managing student conduct varied in percentage with 70% as a low and 94% as a high.

In Table 22, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 22 teachers were asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that school leadership does not make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support varied in percentage from 5% to 16%. Teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about instructional practices and support varied in percentage from 84% to 95%.

In Table 23, each school is represented except two. These two participants were not at the respective school during the time of the 2018 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition's Survey. In Table 23 teachers were asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about new teacher support. Teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this question ranged in percentage from 3% as a low to 29% as a high. Teachers agreeing or

strongly agreeing that school leadership does make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about new teacher support varied in range from 71% as a low to 97% as a high.

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey given to teachers in 2018 asked twenty different question pertaining to their current administration. The questions were answered as strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or agree. If the teachers were not satisfied with administration in a certain question they would answer disagree or strongly disagree. If the teachers were satisfied with the way their current administration was handling the specific question, they would answer agree or strongly agree. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. This question pertained to teachers being held to high standards for delivering instruction to students.

Quantitative Phase Data Analysis-Part Four (NC School Report Card)

Table 24 outlines the participants in the study, the performance letter grade of their school, the performance score of their school, the growth achieved, and the growth score of their respective schools for the 2016-2017 school year. The following table outlines the same information for the 2017-2018 school year for each of the participants. In North Carolina, a school that has a performance score lower than a “C” is considered a low-performing school, unless that school exceeded growth for the school year. In that case, the school would not be considered low-performing. The expectation is for all schools to at least meet or exceed growth in North Carolina. Table 25 details the specifics of each participant’s school for the 2016-2017 school year. One of the schools represented by a participant had a “B” performance grade and

Table 25

School Achievement and Growth Data 2017-2018 (Quantitative)

Name	Performance Letter Grade	Performance Score	Growth Achieved	Growth Score
1E	D	50	Not Met	50.1
2E	C	59	Not Met	58.5
3E	C	67	Met	80.9
4E	C	56	Exceeded	86
1M	D	48	Not Met	59.9
2M	C	58	Exceeded	85.5
3M	C	60	Exceeded	93.1
4M	D	47	Not Met	63.6
1H	D	49	Not Met	58.8
2H	B	77	Met	75.2
3H	C	69	Met	78.9
4H	C	55	Exceeded	88.1

exceeded growth for the year. Six of the schools represented by the participants had “C” performance grades with two schools not meeting growth, two schools meeting growth, and two schools exceeding growth for the school year. Five of the schools represented by the participants were low-performing schools with a performance letter grade of “D”. One of these schools met growth and four schools did not meet growth for the 2016-2017 school year.

Table 25 outlines the same information for the 2017-2018 school year for each of the participant. This includes the participants in the study, the performance letter grade of their school, the performance score of their school, the growth achieved, and the growth score of their respective schools for the 2017-2018 school year. One of the schools represented by a participant had a “B” performance grade and met growth for the year. Eight of the schools represented by participants had a “C” performance grade with one school not meeting growth, two schools meeting growth, and five schools exceeding growth. Four schools represented by the participants had “D” performance grades with all of them not meeting growth for the 2017-2018 school year.

Tables 24 and 25 depict data from the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 school years including the performance letter grade of their school, the performance score of their school, the growth achieved, and the growth score of their school. The data shows two schools went up a performance letter grade from “D” to “C.” This advancement meant the schools were no longer considered low-performing in North Carolina. One school went down a letter grade from “C” to “D.” Nine schools maintained the same letter grade for both school years. Three schools changed their growth category from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. One school went from not meeting to exceeding growth, one school went from meeting to exceeding growth, and one school went from not meeting to meeting growth. Two schools maintained the same growth standard by exceeding growth. One school maintained the same growth standard by meeting growth. Two

schools maintained the same growth standard by not meeting growth and one school went from exceeding to meeting growth.

Out of twelve of the respective schools the participants represented, six of them went up in proficiency from the 2016-2017 school year. One school remained the same and five schools went down in proficiency. There is one “B” school, seven “C” schools, and four “D” schools according to the 2017-2018 NC School Report Card data. Sixty-seven percent of the participants are currently leading schools that are performing in the proficient range according to North Carolina guidelines. Forty-one and six tenths percent of the participants are leading schools that are not meeting growth according to North Carolina guidelines.

Program Evaluation Findings

The data gathered from the survey and interview of the participants, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, and the North Carolina School Report Card provided answers to the three evaluation questions that have guided this study. The first question focused on the benefits students received from completing Service Leadership Projects as part of the MSA degree. Data taken from each of the four sources aided in answering this question. During the survey, participants noted through self-reflection the leadership skills they had acquired during the SLP process. Six participants in the study (two high school, two middle school, and two elementary school) indicated by 100% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. Three participants of the study (one middle school and two high school) indicated by 92% they had strong or good practice with all twelve of the leadership standards covered. Two participants of the study (one elementary school and one high school) indicated by 83% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (high school) indicated by 75% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (middle

school) indicated by 58% they had strong or good practiced with the leadership standards. One participant (elementary school) indicated by 50% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. During the interview, 80% of the participants responded with a rating of four or five on a scale of one to five with one being the lowest and five being the highest when asked to rate their experiences in completing Service Leadership Projects. Details regarding the participants' experiences were coded and recorded earlier in this section. Through the NCTWCS, data was analyzed that aided in answering the first evaluation question. Teachers responses to the NCTWCS in 2018 asked twenty different questions pertaining to their current administration. Teachers has Likert scale choices to respond whether they strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or agree. If the teachers were not satisfied with administration in a certain question they would answer disagree or strongly disagree. If the teachers were satisfied with the way their current administration was handling the specific question, they would answer agree or strongly agree. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%%, and this was the highest out of all the participants (one principal). This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%, and this pertained to five of the principals. Data gathered from the NC School Report Card showed the academic progress made by the participants' schools. The data shows two schools went up a performance letter grade from "D" to "C." This advancement meant the schools were no longer considered low-performing in North Carolina. One school went down a letter grade from "C" to "D." Nine schools maintained the same letter grade for both school years. Three schools changed their growth category from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. One school went from not meeting to exceeding

growth, one school went from meeting to exceeding growth, and one school went from not meeting to meeting growth. Two schools maintained the same growth standard by exceeding growth. One school maintained the same growth standard by meeting growth. Two schools maintained the same growth standard by not meeting growth and one school went from exceeding to meeting growth. Out of twelve of the respective schools the participants represented, six of them went up in proficiency from the 2016-2017 school year. One school remained the same and five schools went down in proficiency. There is one “B” school, seven “C” schools, and four “D” schools according to the 2017-2018 NC School Report Card data. Sixty-seven percent of the participants are currently leading schools that are performing in the proficient range according to North Carolina guidelines. Forty-one and six tenths percent of the participants are leading schools that are not meeting growth according to North Carolina guidelines. Were there benefits from completing Service Leadership Projects as part of the MSA degree? Each of the four data sources proved there were benefits from completing Service Leadership Projects as part of the MSA degree. During the survey, participants noted through self-reflection the leadership skills they had acquired during the SLP process, which are benefits. During the interview, 80% of the participants responded with a rating of four or five on a scale of one to five with one being the lowest and five being the highest when asked to rate their experiences in completing Service Leadership Projects. The NCTWCS data was extremely positive in favor of the school leader and the NC School Report Cards show 67% of the participants are leading schools that are proficient by NC standards.

The second evaluation question pertained to the strategies that were utilized during the process to aid the student in learning. The participants expounded upon the various strategies that aided them throughout the program during the interview process of the research. The

participants' answers were coded and recorded in this section. One of the specific skills addressed by 40% of the participants in which they were all in agreement regarded the data collection portion of the study. These participants discussed the importance of learning how to collect pertinent data for your particular school. Another skill that was addressed by 50% of the participants involved learning processes and procedures. Specifically, the processes and procedures for research, analysis, and change. Participants also discussed how the Service Learning Projects are aligned with principal competencies and getting real world practice with the standards. They also noted through self-reflection the leadership skills they had acquired during the SLP process. Six participants in the study (two high school, two middle school, and two elementary school) indicated by 100% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. Three participants of the study (one middle school and two high school) indicated by 92% they had strong or good practice with all twelve of the leadership standards covered. Two participants of the study (one elementary school and one high school) indicated by 83% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (high school) indicated by 75% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (middle school) indicated by 58% they had strong or good practiced with the leadership standards. One participant (elementary school) indicated by 50% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. All district level employees had to have experience in elementary, middle, or high school and were grouped according to which grade span they were employed. Through the NCTWCS, data was accrued to determine skills the leaders obtained. The NCTWCS given to teachers in 2018 asked twenty different questions pertaining to their current administration. The questions were answered as strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or agree. If the teachers were not satisfied with administration in a certain question they would answer disagree or

strongly disagree. If the teachers were satisfied with the way their current administration was handling the specific question, they would answer agree or strongly agree. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. This question pertained to teachers being held to high standards for delivering instruction to students. What strategies were acquired by participants during the program that prepared them to be school leaders? Participants learned how to collect and analyze data as it pertains to a particular school. After the data analysis, participants learned how to apply the data through various processes and procedures. The participants were exposed to real world practice aligned with principal competencies.

The third evaluation question asked the participants for their suggestions that could better the program. The participants' suggestions were recorded, coded, and documented previously in this section. Participants were asked at the end of the interview process to discuss any suggestions they would offer to improve the program. The participants were also asked if there was anything they needed during their tenure in the program they did not receive. Frequency and percentage were utilized in determining the prevalent themes. The interview questions utilized to answer the evaluation question were questions nine and ten (see Appendix B). Participants had varying ideas when asked for suggestions to better the program. Only two of the themes were mentioned multiple times. The first was budgeting. The participants that discussed budgeting felt they did not have enough exposure during the SLP process to prepare them for their future leadership roles. The other theme mentioned more than once was real-world simulations. The participants that discussed real-world simulations felt they could have gotten a better experience

if the MSA program included more of these situations to better prepare them for future leadership roles. What were some suggestions that could better the program for future participants? The two topics that were mentioned the most frequent were budgeting and real-world simulations. The participants that mentioned these topics felt future participants could be better prepared if they had more exposure to these areas.

Limitations of the Study

When conducting the study, there were limitations. The first limitation included the participants' reluctance to complete the entire study. The survey portion of the study had a total of fourteen participants. The survey was delivered via Google Forms and was completed in an online format. The second portion of the study was the interview process. During this process, only twelve of the fourteen participants committed to complete the interview. Therefore, data was collected from the survey from the original fourteen participants, but data was just collected from twelve participants for the interview process. Participants in two situations either were not at their particular school or had moved prior to the delivery of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey in 2018. Therefore, the information from that school was excluded from that data measure. It is also important to note that the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey can be utilized as a tool for teachers to express their displeasure with an administrator for various reasons. For example, if an administrator had to coach a particular teacher and the teacher was not happy with the process, this is an opportunity for the teacher to express their frustrations in an anonymous format.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Preparing future principals for their roles within school systems has changed throughout the years. Universities have devised varying techniques in which they accomplish this monumental task. ECU uses Service Leadership Projects as a tool to provide training for prospective MSA degree candidates. The Service Leadership Projects students must complete in order to graduate provide a foundation upon which the student can learn and grow into an educational leader. The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of preparation program for future school leaders and to determine if there are relevant suggestions to better the program. The evaluation will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature and will involve past participants of the MSA program at ECU that have obtained jobs in educational leadership roles. As students successfully fulfill the requirements for a MSA degree, the six completed Service Leadership Projects are encompassed in an electronic portfolio. Students complete the Service Leadership Projects and obtain the MSA degree. Are the students fully prepared to undertake a calling in educational leadership after completing the program? There are three major questions that are addressed during this program evaluation. The first major question is what are the benefits of having to complete Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree? The second question is what are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects? The third question is what are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could better the program? These three research questions guided the focus of this program evaluation. The purpose of conducting an evaluation on the principal preparation program ECU offers was to determine the effectiveness of the current practices

employed by the university. This evaluation centered upon local effectiveness. It is of the upmost importance students that are part of the program are being adequately prepared to fulfill leadership roles upon completing the program. Students must be prepared to accept the everyday challenges that are a part of the school environment. When the former student enters the office of principal or assistant principal, it is vital they understand what they are supposed to do, how they are supposed to act, and how to face adversity. The student must be fully prepared to successfully fulfill the obligations they will accept when taking the position.

Another important part of the evaluation included discovering any additional areas participants feel the program is lacking in preparing them for real world situations as they accept leadership roles in schools. The findings will be significant to the Department of Educational Leadership in ECU in ensuring they are adequately preparing future leaders as well as taking suggestions from past participants and incorporating them in educating participants in the program in the future. As society is steadily changing, so are schools. Keeping abreast with the current environments in which school leaders are immersed in is an important piece of managing an effective preparation program. This evaluation should provide insight into the current state of affairs in schools and whether or not the student felt adequately trained to handle the challenges, pressures, and decisions they face daily. It would also provide ample opportunity for former students to discuss areas in which they were not adequately trained to fulfill the expectations they faced after completing the program. The program evaluation consisted of mixed methods framework to conduct the study with the qualitative piece given priority. Both quantitative and qualitative were collected during the survey portion of the study as well as the interview portion of the study. In Creswell (2010) mixed methods is defined as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research

approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p. 49). A mixed methods approach was appropriate and was utilized for expansion in this study. Expansion was the purpose of the mixed methods framework as the reason for the evaluation was to learn more and apply the results accordingly (Fitzpatrick et al., 1997).

In Clark and Ivankova (2017), mixed methods research was discussed as a way to identify patterns of both quantitative and qualitative data together within one study. When the researcher had access to both types of data within the study, it was possible the results will be more comprehensive than if the researcher were only using one type of data. Considering this study has a substantial qualitative piece with the interviews being a major data point, but also an important quantitative piece with the participants’ schools’ scores being analyzed, the mixed methods approach made the most sense when deciding upon a framework for this particular study.

Participants for the qualitative portion of the program evaluation were past graduates of the MSA program at ECU. Participants only included students that obtained a job as a principal, assistant principal, or a central office position after graduation. Participants must have held a job in educational leadership for a minimum of two years to be eligible. Participants only included graduates that were required to complete Service Leadership Projects and the necessary digital portfolio. Participants did not include previous graduates that were subjected to taking exit exams to obtain licensure in school administration because these students were not required to participate in the Service Leadership Projects. Participants graduated from 2012-2015. There were 287 graduates during this time period. The study aimed to include four participants from

the elementary field, four participants from middle school, and four participants with high school experience. This is 4.24% of the total number of graduates.

Data was collected in four different ways for this study. The first data collection method was the survey. Survey questions were formulated based on the North Carolina Leadership standards. The survey was designed to discover if the Service Learning Project model was effective in preparing graduates in the North Carolina Leadership standards. The survey was delivered electronically through google forms. The information will be organized into tables that will give a clear understanding of the data collected.

The second data collection method that was utilized was the interview. The purpose of the interview was to collect the qualitative information needed for the program evaluation. The participants' answers were divided into themes. Data was gathered from approximately twelve different qualified participants. A series of questions were developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program as well as an opportunity for the participant to speak freely and candidly regarding areas in which they feel the program could use improvement. The Likert scale was utilized during this phase. The participants' answers were read and reviewed multiple times. The answers were (focused) coded and divided into relevant themes. The next two types of data collected were made available to the public by the state.

The third was the North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey. Specific questions pertaining to School Leadership were documented and analyzed from the NCTWCS. Those questions came from the "School Leadership" section that asked teachers to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about leadership in their schools.

The final data source was the North Carolina School Report Card. The NC School Report Card was utilized to complete the study. The specific data strands that address proficiency

performance and growth were collected and analyzed. The proficiency and growth of a school is a factor in determining the effectiveness of a graduate of the MSA program. The data was triangulated from each of the four data sources to answer the overarching question of whether or not students are fully prepared to lead a school after completing the program.

Program Evaluation Question #1

What are the benefits of having to complete a Service Leadership Projects in order to obtain a MSA degree?

Data analysis of participants' responses to the survey indicated that 100% did see value in the Service Learning Project approach to obtaining a MSA degree. The participants were also asked twelve questions pertaining to the North Carolina School Executive Standards. Survey questions were formulated based on the North Carolina Leadership standards because this is the practice in which educational leaders are evaluated in NC. The survey was designed to discover if the Service Learning Project model was effective in preparing graduates in the North Carolina Leadership standards. The responses were elicited so that they responded in a Likert scale. The answers to these questions could be strong practice, good practice, some practice or little practice. Six participants in the study indicated (100%) they had strong or good practice in all twelve leadership standards. Three participants in the study indicated (92%) they had strong or good practice in the twelve leadership standards. Two participants in the study indicated (83%) they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated (75%) they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated they had (58%) they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant indicated (50%) they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards.

During the interview portion of the study, responses were elicited so that they responded

in a Likert scale, and participants were asked if completing Service Learning Projects made them a better leader. Participants were asked to rate their experience on a scale of one to five with one being the highest. After answering the rating section of the questions, participants were asked why or why not? Out of the ten participants that that participated in this portion of the study, 50% gave the highest rating of a five, 30% of the participants rated the process at a four, 10% of the participants rated the process at a three and 10% of the participants rated the process with a two when asked this question.

The NCTWCS had twenty questions that specifically addressed the teachers about the leadership of their schools. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%, this would be a negative for the leader. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. This question pertained to teachers being held to high standards for delivering instruction to students.

The North Carolina School Report Card provided access to the participants in the study, the performance letter grade of their school, the performance score of their school, the growth achieved, and the growth score of their respective schools for the 2016-2017 school year and the 2017-2018 school year. This data would show the instructional leadership capabilities of the school leader. The data showed two schools went up a performance letter grade from “D” to “C.” This advancement meant the schools were no longer considered low-performing in North Carolina. One school went down a letter grade from “C” to “D.” Nine schools maintained the same letter grade for both school years. Three schools changed their growth category from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. One school went from not meeting to exceeding growth, one school went

from meeting to exceeding growth, and one school went from not meeting to meeting growth. Two schools maintained the same growth standard by exceeding growth. One school maintained the same growth standard by meeting growth. Two schools maintained the same growth standard by not meeting growth and one school went from exceeding to meeting growth.

In looking at the data points from growth and proficiency, data was triangulated from the survey, interview, NCTWCS and the NC School Report Card to find common themes in answering the first evaluation question. In regards to the survey, 66.7% of participants indicated by (50%) or higher they had strong or good practice in all of the NC leadership standards. The interview indicated at least 80% of participants rated the process as a four or higher in terms of the SLP process preparing them to be better leaders. Referring to the NCTWCS, out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. From the NC School Report Card, growth and proficiency points are an integral determining factor in the performance of a school leader and having the ability to ascertain whether or not this could be factored in as reaping benefits from the way the participants were trained. In pertaining to the letter grade factor, which includes both proficiency and growth pieces, 91.6% of the participants either maintained their letter grades or went up. In regards to the growth aspect, 83.3% of participants maintained the same growth distinction or went up a category. Both of these percentages are exceedingly high in regards to either maintaining or moving up in performance for the participants' respective schools. Each of the four data sources showed there were benefits in completing the SLP process, as each of the participants were trained in this fashion.

Percentages from the survey, the interview, the NCTWCS, and the NC School Report Card supported participants were efficiently trained as school leaders.

Program Evaluation Question #2

What are the strategies used to help aspiring leaders learn from completing these projects?

The participants noted through self-reflection during survey the leadership skills they had acquired during the SLP process. Six participants in the study (two high school, two middle school, and two elementary school) indicated by 100% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. Three participants of the study (one middle school and two high school) indicated by 92% they had strong or good practice with all twelve of the leadership standards covered. Two participants of the study (one elementary school and one high school) indicated by 83% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (high school) indicated by 75% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards. One participant (middle school) indicated by 58% they had strong or good practiced with the leadership standards. One participant (elementary school) indicated by 50% they had strong or good practice with the leadership standards.

During the interview, one of the specific skills addressed by 40% of the participants in which they were all in agreement regarded the data collection portion of the study. These participants discussed the importance of learning how to collect pertinent data for your particular school. Another skill that was addressed by 50% of the participants involved learning processes and procedures. Specifically, the processes and procedures for research, analysis, and change. Participants also discussed how the Service Learning Projects are aligned with principal competencies and getting real world practice with the standards.

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey given to teachers in 2018 asked twenty different questions pertaining to their current administration and pertained to evaluation question number two. The questions were answered as strongly disagree, disagree, strongly agree, or agree. If the teachers were not satisfied with administration in a certain question they would answer disagree or strongly disagree. If the teachers were satisfied with the way their current administration was handling the specific question, they would answer agree or strongly agree. Out of the twenty questions asked, the high percentage of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was 47%. This question specifically pertained to teachers feeling comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. Out of the twenty questions asked pertaining to school leadership, the high percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was 100%. This question pertained to teachers being held to high standards for delivering instruction to students.

Data was triangulated from the survey, interview, and the NCTWCS to answer this question. During the survey, 85.7% of participants agreed they had strong or good practice in the North Carolina leadership standards. In interview, data collection and analysis was a prevalent theme that emerged as well as learning processes and procedures for research, analysis, and change. The NCTWCS indicated by 100% by teachers they were held to high standards for delivering instruction to students.

Program Evaluation Question #3

What are the suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership that could improve the program?

At the end of the interview process, participants were asked to discuss any suggestions they would offer to improve the program. The participants were also asked if there was anything they needed during their tenure in the program they did not receive. Participants offered up

various ideas for this portion of the study. One idea was to include more shadowing opportunities during the first year of the program, as this had to be initiated by the student. Also, finding principals that were successful in particular areas that students were interested in and then aiding them in making that connection would be a benefit for students. It would be a positive thing for ECU to expand relationships with various counties and schools. Another suggestion included better access to local district staff. It would be helpful to be able to ask these leaders questions during the Service Learning Project process. Other suggestions included having more access to other people in the school. A participant reported they had a mentor in the Assistant Principal, but it was oftentimes difficult to find the time to just sit and discuss the data that needed to be reviewed and what it was saying because the leadership team already had a plan and data they were using. Therefore, having another person in the school to connect with would have been a positive experience. Another suggestion included having better access to the financial aspect of educational leadership. Budgeting was an area where multiple participants felt least prepared. There was a lot of talk about becoming instructional leaders, but not enough about managerial aspects. Suggestions also included ECU becoming more involved in the actual job attainment process. Some students obtained jobs, while other students did not. It was also discussed there should have been some autonomy in choosing the speakers who presented during the leadership seminar class. A further suggestion included more real life scenarios would have been helpful and also incorporating how to write memos to staff. Another suggestion included having an end of program simulation as a way to show growth in practice and also an opportunity to go through real life scenarios during the course of study.

Data was analyzed from the interview to determine suggestions from past participants that have successfully completed their MSA degree and began a career in educational leadership

that could better the program. The suggestions were specifically targeted in interview question number nine and number ten (see Appendix B). The different participants had varying ideas in how the program could be better for future candidates. The two suggestions that were mentioned more than once involved more exposure to the budgeting process and more opportunity for real life simulations.

Recommendations

SLP Improvement

The data collection and data analysis sections of the SLP were the most frequently mentioned by participants, not the action steps. When the participants were asked if they were aware if any of the changes they had implemented while they were serving in their respective schools were still in place, 100% answered no. As a student, the expectation is to grow and achieve the most during the action plan section of the project, however, this is not the case. When the past students reflect, the most growth occurred during the data collection and analysis. It is recommended for the action plan to become as meaningful as the data collection and analysis sections of the SLP. One possible recommendation is for students to revisit SLPs. When a student completes a SLP, they may not ever touch it again. If it were required for students to periodically go back and report on the status of the completed SLPs, it would keep the SLP active. It would not just be a project the student received a grade for and it is over. This would add an extra layer of responsibility for the student and the professors. This would make the action plan more meaningful for the student because it would carry on over an extended period of time.

MSA Instruction

It is recommended ECU facilitate more shadowing opportunities for MSA degree

candidates. It is recommended ECU make shadowing a mandatory activity for students. The students should be exposed to multiple leadership styles and have the opportunity to experience diverse schools as well. Students should be exposed to the financial aspect of school leadership in a more in depth manner. Students should have a basic understanding of state budgeting as well as Title 1 budgeting when they finish the program. Budgeting is an area that requires exposure as well as general working knowledge. Students should be prepared if they are chosen to lead a Title 1 school so they do not mismanage funds. They should also be exposed to what Title 1 schools need and how they differ from schools that are not Title 1. Leading a school that is high poverty requires a different skill set that students should at least be aware. There should be more focus on the managerial aspect of being a school leader and not just on being an instructional leader.

It is recommended ECU incorporate actual budgeting scenarios in their curriculum. Students should be taught the differences between Title 1 budgeting and state budgeting. They should know the different line items in each budget and what money can be used for in these different situations. After the student is taught the basics of budgeting, they should be given budgeting assignments. Actual scenarios should be developed where students are given a set amount of money and they should have to account for how they would spend it in a school year. The student should be given all of the hypothetical school's data to make the experience as authentic as possible. This should be a mandatory assignment and can be incorporated as a real-world simulation for students. Students should be held accountable for the budgets they create. It is also recommended professors actually include a pre-test and a post-test in their courses. The pre-test and the post-test should be the same test so the professors can actually have a true measure of student growth through the course of a semester. The program should broaden the

lens in which they are viewing what is important for future leaders by incorporating these suggestions.

Collaboration with School District Leaders

It is recommended the process of matching students and principals be very intentional in nature. This should be an assignment that is collaborative in nature between ECU and the school district. Some districts may view the participant as an extra set of hands and not be particularly concerned with the student's experience. The program should protect the student from situations such as these, as the student truly has no voice in these matters. It is also recommended for the program to have even more contact with the specific districts/schools in which the students are completing their internship. A principal that has a student intern should commit to speaking with ECU at least monthly during the student's internship to discuss progress and possible challenges. It is the responsibility of the program to ensure the student is receiving the experience they deserve and need to be an effective school leader.

Continuing Education

It is recommended that a study of this nature continue for several years in which more data can be tracked and analyzed. This type of data can be difficult to obtain due to the fluidity in which participants change their positions. It is hard to determine the effectiveness of an educational leader if they do not stay in the same school for multiple years. When an educational leader remains in a position for several years, it is easier to verify the effectiveness of that particular person. School performance and growth can be tracked and directly related back to the leader. Therefore, it may be more effective to track the actual participant, not the school, during a minimum five-year time period. This approach would have to allot for the fact that many educational leaders that are proving to be effective are oftentimes moved to institutions with a

higher need. This would skew the data for the participant during the first couple of years of residency in the new school with the higher need. It would also be beneficial to consider a method to attract more potential participants to be involved in these studies. It would be beneficial for ECU to contact alumni or secure a sponsorship to develop a method to gain more participation in studies of this nature. If a sponsorship could be attained to aid in the costs, the university could provide a professional development session for current educational leaders where continuing education credits would be offered. The participants would have to complete a survey for the university if they elected to participate in the free professional development. The university could use the surveys as a method to collect data from past graduates. It is recommended the professional development also bridge the gap between the SLPs and the principalship. This would give current educational leaders a chance to reconnect with professors, ask questions, and get advice on their current challenging situations. This would also provide an opportunity for former students to network and share ideas. It would be worthwhile for ECU to also provide professional development for the principals that sponsor the interns. It would be a rewarding experience for all of the principals to meet at designated times during the school year to discuss what interns are doing at specific schools. This would give principals new ideas and a way to collaborate with their peers.

Recommendations for Current Educational Leaders

It is recommended current educational leaders continue with their own personal professional development after they secure their positions. There are many opportunities in North Carolina to further expand capacity. The North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association (NCPAPA) offers various programs to further develop the principals and assistant principals in North Carolina. One program they offer is the Distinguished Leaders in

Practice (DLP). This program is intended for principals. They also offer Leadership in Personalized and Digital Learning Principal Cohorts (LPDLP). They offer Future-Ready Leadership (FRL) for assistant principals. They also offer various instructional symposiums and seminars. It is also recommended for current educational leaders to take time to celebrate success. When a school moves up a performance grade or moves up a growth category, these are major successes for the school and the principal. These successes must be celebrated and publicized. It is important for the staff to keep morale up and it is also important to the community in which the school serves to know how well their school is performing based on North Carolina guidelines.

Recommendations for the State Board of Education in North Carolina

It is recommended the state board facilitate the development of a means to track principal effectiveness in much the same way teacher effectiveness is tracked. After students graduate with their teaching degrees, universities can track their EVAAS data for three years. This gives the university the opportunity to determine if their methods are effective. It is recommended the same type of tracking system be developed for principals. Universities should have the opportunity to see if their methods for training principals are working or not. If universities are able to track this data, they can make adjustments to their principal preparation programs. It is also recommended the North Carolina Principal Fellows program continue in North Carolina. Principal Fellows completed a much more in depth internship than the traditional MSA candidates which offered them a better training experience. Principal Fellows were ready for assistant principal positions because they had first hand experience.

Conclusions

All of the fourteen participants agreed they did see value in the Service Learning Project

approach to obtaining a MSA degree. Eighty percent of participants gave an above average rating when asked whether or not completing Service Learning Projects made them a better leader. Since the participants varied in grade span and level, this was a strong indicator of the overall merit of completing Service Learning Projects and the continuation of this practice in the MSA program at ECU. The process is worthy of continuing and fine tuning for future generations of leaders. Of the twelve participants that completed the survey, two of the schools went up a performance letter grade. This was a huge achievement for those two schools. Nine schools maintained the same school performance letter grade, which was also an accomplishment for those school leaders. The success of these school leaders was directly related to performing Service Learning Projects in the MSA program at ECU. These were major achievements that are highly celebrated in the public school system and require a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication. The real-life, hands on experience is paramount for future educational leaders. The students that complete these projects reap tangible, proven benefits and develop specific skills that are necessary for success in the educational setting. The educational leaders that participated in this research are proof the process is working in the MSA program at ECU. Performing Service Leadership Projects while in the MSA program at ECU is necessary in producing future effective educational leaders. It is necessary to get the real world experience Service Leadership Projects provide candidates for Masters of School Administration degrees and future school leaders.

Scriven's (2007) study found the following, "Evaluation is the process of determining merit, worth, or significance; *an* evaluation is a product of that process" (p. 1). Through the evaluation process, it will be determined if Service Learning Projects have merit, worth, or significance as they pertain to the MSA program. Are students fully prepared to lead a school

after completing the program? If answering this question strictly by yes or no guidelines, the answer would be yes. Students are prepared to lead schools when completing this program. Students are taught by faculty that utilize several different strategies to ensure the student has the most exposure possible. Students are completely immersed in hands on experiences so they can fully understand what it is like to lead a school. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (1997), a participant-oriented approach was “One that stressed firsthand experience with program activities and settings.” Students are given the opportunity through Service Leadership Projects to have these firsthand experiences. Through action, students have the chance to become prepared to lead schools before they have their first job. Students work alongside principals and assistant principals in schools and get to participate in the many daily tasks that must be completed in order to lead a school effectively.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Heather Walston
CC: Marjorie Ringler
Date: 3/26/2019
Re: UMCIRB 18-001916
Principal Preparation Programs: Service Leadership Projects (Program Evaluation)

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) occurred on 3/26/2019. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a Final Report application to the UMCIRB prior to the Expected End Date provided in the IRB application. If the study is not completed by this date, an Amendment will need to be submitted to extend the Expected End Date. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Consent	Consent Forms
Interview Questions	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Phone Script	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Survey	Surveys and Questionnaires
Walston dissertation proposal	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, do you feel the SLP process made you a better leader? Why or why not?
2. Did you feel there were parts of the SLP process that were unnecessary? If so, which parts?
3. What would have been helpful support during the process that you did not have access to at the time?
4. Are you aware of any changes you helped implement that are still in place today?
5. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, do you think the SLP model is the most effective way to train future educational leaders?
6. Did you feel adequately supported by your professors during the SLP process? (all, some or none)
7. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, did your principal mentor provide enough support for you?
8. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, please rate how prepared you were for your first leadership position after completing the program?
9. Is there anything East Carolina University could have provided for you that you did not receive?
10. If there was one thing you could change about the process, what would it be?

APPENDIX C: WRITTEN SURVEY

Survey for ECU SLP Participants

(Assistant Principals, Principals, and Central Office staff)

* Required

1. Email address *

2. What answer best describes your job description? *

Mark only one oval.

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Central Office/Former Principal

3. How many years of experience do you have in your current position? Clarify years of experience if Central Office Staff (how many years as Principal, how many years at Central Office) *

4. Were you a NC Principal Fellow? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

5. Do you see value in the SLP approach? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

6. How would you rate yourself on the following NC School Executive Leadership Standards? I practice effective leadership when: I focus on my own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals. *

Check all that apply.

- Little practice

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

8. I demonstrate knowledge of 21st century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or hold frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff, and parents around these topics. *

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

9. I ensure there is a logical and appropriate alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program. *

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

10. I create processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge. *

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

11. I challenge staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills, and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students. *

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

13. **I create processes for identifying, benchmarking, and providing students access to a variety of 21st century instructional tools (technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs. ***

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

14. **I create processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs. ***

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

15. **I create processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction. ***

Mark only one oval.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

16. **I create processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time. ***

Check all that apply.

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice

- Little practice
- Some practice
- Good practice
- Strong practice

Send me a copy of my responses.

Powered by
 Google Forms

APPENDIX D: NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING WORKING CONDITIONS SURVEY

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

These questions include the following: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with statements about leadership in your school.

- a. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.
- b. Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.
- c. The school leadership consistently supports teachers.
- d. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
- e. The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
- f. Teacher performance is assessed objectively.
- g. Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.
- h. The faculty and staff have a shared vision.
- i. The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.
- j. The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.
- k. The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.

The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:

- a. Leadership issues
- b. Facilities and resources
- c. The use of time in my school
- d. Professional development
- e. Teacher leadership
- f. Community support and involvement

- g. Managing student conduct
- h. Instructional practices and support
- i. New teacher support

